

1996

Gloria Naylor

A Novel by the author of *The Women of Brewster Place*

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From 1996

Paranoia is a slow poison, and a lethal one. It usually starts with small things and then grows to color almost everything in your life. A harmless incident takes on gigantic proportions until "they" are everywhere and "it" is waiting for you around every corner.

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And there was the continual feeling that my life was no longer mine; it belonged to strangers in dark glasses. It was invasion in its crudest form and it robbed me of my sense of peace. It also robbed me of my privacy for reasons that were still hidden to me.

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I had to accept that every thought I wrote down was possibly monitored . . . People I hadn't invited into my life had entered anyway and were watching my every move.

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For Sterling who not only believed me but believed in me.

Thank You.

The weapons of tomorrow will not only be aimed at hitting your body.
They will also be aimed at your mind.

—Armen Vartanian

1996



I didn't want to tell this story. It's going to take courage. Perhaps more courage than I possess, but they've left me no alternatives. I am in a battle for my mind. If I stop now, they'll have won, and I will lose myself. One of the problems I have is where to begin and how to begin. I guess, as with most good stories, I should start at the beginning. And, as with most good stories, tell it simply.

I was born in New York City, the first of three daughters, to parents who had migrated from the South to New York in 1949. I arrived just one month after that move. So, I grew up in the North in a Southern home with the language and foods of the South, and with the story-telling. My parents had many stories about Robinsonville, Mississippi. They'd spent the first twenty years of their lives as sharecroppers in that sleepy, backwater town. As a shy child, I was always in the corner listening with big ears to the tales of fishing for catfish on the muddy levy, finding dewberries in the woods, and of course, picking cotton, because they were cotton farmers. My father liked the South. My mother never did.

I inherited my love of books from my mother, who was never able to completely satisfy her hunger for reading. The public library was off-limits for black people in those days, and as tenant farmers, her family did not have the luxury of buying books. So, after working with her own family in their fields, she took her spare time on Saturdays to hire herself out in someone else's fields for the day. She made fifty cents for a day of labor, and at the end of the month, she had two dollars, which she used to write to book clubs and obtain her reading material.

She made a vow to herself that none of her children would be born in the South, and she kept that promise. My parents were not naïve, though. They didn't think that moving from Mississippi to New York would end racial discrimination, but my mother felt that at least the public libraries would be open to her children. Before my sisters and I were even able to read, she would take us on trips to the library and say, "Do you see all these books? As soon as you're able to write your name, all of these books will be yours. For two weeks, but still yours." I grew up believing that books were more than books—they were passports to a world that held endless possibilities. The library became, to me, a sacred place that I used like a shrine, to read, to think, and to dream. And what I dreamed was that one day I too could be a writer. It would be a long and winding road before that dream was realized.

I was a shy adolescent, and my mother noticed that I was not talking. She was sure that there were things which I must have been questioning in my early teens, the changes in my body, the changes in the world around me. But I would just sit quietly in my room and read. So, she went out one day and brought home a white plastic diary from Woolworth's, the kind with the flimsy lock that your sister could open with a safety pin. She told me, "Gloria, I'm sure that there are things going on with your body that you don't understand, things around our home that you don't understand. And since you can't seem to find the words to talk to your father and me about these things, why don't you write them down in here?" She was wise enough to drop the diary on the bed and not press the issue. I was like any twelve or thirteen year old, if my parents wanted me to do something, I would give that activity the kiss of death.

I picked up that diary and began to write. I wrote about all the things that I didn't seem to have the words to talk about. None of it was earth-shattering—my adolescent fears and hopes—but it

was important to me. I wrote and wrote. When I'd filled that diary, I wrote on spare paper in the back of my loose-leaf notebooks, on stray tablets around the house. Those journal entries turned into poems, and those poems turned into short stories. Sometime I would read them to my parents, but for the most part they stayed hidden in my dresser drawer. A pattern had been set that shaped the rest of my life: if you can't say it, write it.

It was 1968 when I finished high school. To my parent's chagrin—since I was their brightest child—I didn't go on to college. My parents, who in New York worked blue collar jobs—my mother a telephone operator and my father a motorman for the New York City Transit—held hopes that their daughters would at least finish high school, something they were not able to do. They also held out hopes that one or two of us would possibly go on to city college. If we became teachers or nurses, that would have been fine with them. They wanted us to be independent and trained us that way. Your race or your gender was no excuse for not succeeding. If you hit a roadblock, get up and bounce back; if you hit a wall, jump higher. The world owed you nothing but a chance, and even the slimmest chance was enough of an opening to somehow squeeze through and make your mark. We were raised to believe that no one was better than we were just because of skin color. Regardless of what the world may say, what you tell yourself is all that matters. And if you tell yourself that you're a failure, then that is what you are.

The country was in turmoil around me with the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-war protests, and like so many in my generation, I hoped to make a difference in the world. I didn't see politics as the way for me. So, instead of joining a black activist group or becoming a hippie, I joined the Jehovah Witnesses. They spoke about a theocratic government being the only solution for mankind's problems. The roots of the present unrest ran deep and

long into history, and the only way to fix the world was to prepare for the coming of God's government. I threw myself wholeheartedly into this organization and became a missionary. My preaching activities took me to North Carolina and Florida, and I found that I enjoyed living in the South. The pace was slower, and the people more laid back than in the North.

My father's parents had remained in the South until the 1960's, and my moving there brought back memories of visiting my grandparents in the summertime. I had a cousin, Darlene; we were always in some sort of mischief, running barefoot through my grandmother's garden and breaking her tomato plants, begging pennies from my grandfather to spend at the corner store for Mary Janes or Tootsie Rolls. Always I remembered the smells: the thick smoky air, the fresh grass after a shower. The feel of the warm dust between my toes. I was in my twenties when I returned and I no longer ran barefoot on dusty roads, but in my memory I always would. And that was to remain the South for me.

After two years of preaching in the South and seven in the organization, I left the Jehovah Witnesses. But I don't regret those years. They brought me out of my shyness by giving me a greater cause to focus on than my own self-consciousness. Those years also taught me to care about people. More importantly, they taught me that it's okay to march to the beat of a different drummer. Jehovah Witnesses see themselves as being outside of all present governments. Like the traditional Quakers, they are pacifists. They don't go to war; they don't salute the flag. They believe that Easter and Christmas are religious holidays with pagan roots, so they don't celebrate them. I became used to being "different" and quite honestly, a part of me enjoyed being a rebel of sorts.

I drifted away from that religion because I woke up one day to realize that I had only a high school education with no marketable skills. I wanted to go to college, and they didn't encourage

it in those years. It was 1975, and the theocratic government I'd hoped for was still not there. My decision to leave the Jehovah's Witnesses wasn't an easy one, and it happened over time. They gave you more than a religion; they gave you a fellowship. Slowly, I had to replace friends, build for myself a value system. It took a while for me to see that even though I didn't belong to a church, I was still a spiritual person. I still had worth.

I entered college in a nursing program. My middle sister was a nurse, and it was a field my mother had had hopes of entering before she'd settled into raising a family. But I found myself spending more time on my English classes than my nursing classes. I had never stopped writing, even as a missionary. I transferred over into a Liberal Arts program and chose English as my major. This choice took me to Brooklyn College and introduced me to creative writing classes. I felt as if I'd finally come home.

One of my creative writing professors held the position that in order to write good literature we must first read good literature. One of the books we were required to read was Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. It was my first book by a black woman. It tells the story of Pecola Breedlove, a little black girl who believed that all of her problems and her family's problems would be solved if she only had blue eyes. Pecola's search for blue eyes eventually drove her insane. This book spoke to me like none had before. It was about my beauty, my right to have a place in the world in spite of dark skin and kinky hair. It read like pure poetry.

I went on to discover other black writers at Brooklyn College, to discover a whole history of black writers even as far back as slavery times, when it was illegal to teach slaves to read or write. It slowly dawned on me that I had a history in America. I yearned to add my stories to the legacy. This knowledge gave me the authority to pick up the pen. That very semester, I began writing short stories about a little street that was walled off from the

rest of the town, that was home to several black women who had come there as a place of last resort. These women differed in their skin color, from ebony to ivory; they differed in their age, their religious affiliations, their politics, and even their sexual preferences. What they held in common was Brewster Place, a street they turned into a rich tapestry of their hopes and fears, their defeats and triumphs.

I wrote *The Women Of Brewster Place* in my junior and senior years at Brooklyn College. It was rough going because I was on my own and putting myself through college by working mid-nights as a switchboard operator in different Manhattan hotels. I wrote after finishing classes and on my two days off from the job. I couldn't write on the job, but at three or four in the morning, after the guests were mostly in bed, I would edit the work I had done at home. Switchboard operators were my first audience. I read sections of the book to the woman who relieved me in the mornings. My supervisors were mainly Irish and Polish women who took great pride in the fact that I was going to school and trying to "make something of myself." They arranged my schedule as much as they could to accommodate my classes.

As a rule, older students make better students, and I was no exception. I used my time well at Brooklyn College. It took me seven years because some semesters I could only go part-time. I ended up with a grade point average of 3.8 out of a possible 4.0. My original game plan after graduating was to get my doctorate in American Studies and then teach while I continued to write, hoping for tenure - or a high-class union card, as I called it. I was offered a full scholarship to Yale University. With one book under my belt, I entered those strange waters. I didn't have the culture shock that so many students did because I was 31 years old. I knew what I was about, getting the best grades possible with the right recommendations to attain a professorship some place. But graduate school was

competitive. I realized I would have to put my writing on hold if I wanted to compete with the intensity needed to meet my goal. So I decided to leave after two years with my masters in hand and devote myself to writing full-time.

My whole family turned out for that graduation: my parents and sisters, my niece and nephew, aunts and uncles. They were understandably proud of me, but I couldn't have been more proud of them. There they were: school-bus drivers, cleaning matrons, transit workers, and factory workers, all turned out in their best as we went from deans' teas to social mixers. I wanted everyone to know that these were the people I came from; these were the shoulders I stand on. My father told me in a quiet moment, "You know, when I was growing up, the thought that one of my children would graduate from Yale seemed as likely to me as men walking on the moon. And I've lived long enough to see both."

My first novel, *The Women Of Brewster Place*, won the National Book Award. It put me on the literary map and helped me to get teaching jobs as I wrote my other books. I taught a lot in those early years because although my books were critical successes, they didn't become best-sellers. I didn't mind, though, because I was doing what I loved and making a living at it. I knew that made me one of the blessed few on earth, and I like to think I accepted that blessing with grace. I threw myself into my novels. If they needed research, I did research. If I needed to travel, I traveled. I did whatever my characters and the situation warranted because after all, they had entrusted me with these stories.

It was while I was doing research for my third novel, *Mama Day*, that I discovered St. Helena Island. It is one of the barrier islands that sits off the coast from North Carolina to Florida. Collectively, these are called the Sea Islands, and they hold a different history and topography from the rest of the South. They were home to the Gullah people, who were brought there as slaves. Since

they were separated from the mainland during slavery days, they developed a distinct language and culture of their own. Originally fishermen, farmers, and basket weavers, the Gullah are a dark skinned and regal people, who are trying to hang on to their culture as the young cross the bridges to resettle around the United States. The young leave and the developers come. They are drawn by the warm winters, the live oaks dripping with Spanish moss, the palmettos fringing the salt marshes that extend for miles, weaving in and out of strips of land that lie below a blue and welcoming sky. You feel more like you're in the Caribbean than in America. There is a stillness about the place. The sandy soil under your feet, the gentle marsh breezes coming from the east, all seem to speak of eternity. Of quiet. Of calm. I walked those dusty lanes, originally in search of a character, but slowly realized that I had found a place where I wouldn't be afraid to die.

Most people have heard of Hilton Head, but that island is far removed from St. Helena. In Hilton Head, the palm trees have been cultivated to stand in straight lines like soldiers. Shopping malls abound, and the white sandy beaches are hidden from view by concrete highways. A paved, two-lane highway also runs through St. Helena, but, as it makes its way over the bridge from Beaufort to its end at Fripp Island, it is surrounded by salt marshes, tomato fields, and live oaks. You feel that people live on St. Helena, not just tour it.

When my research was finished, I made a promise to myself that I would return. I also decided that if I made any money from the current novel, I would mortgage my life to the bank and buy a retirement home. I kept that promise, and in 1988 found a little black and white Victorian cottage on two acres of land. The property sat on the edge of St. Helena Sound with three hundred feet of beachfront. The down payment emptied my savings account, but I didn't care. The property was my own little Eden.

I would sit at a folded table in the sunroom that gave me a view of the water, drinking my morning coffee in a pink mug that said, "Hers" in blue lettering. That table, with its one chair and that mug, were my only possessions besides a trailer camping bed that I picked up second-hand. But this, indeed, was mine. I looked over at the plantation house and thought about how things had come full circle. My people once worked this land as slaves, and here I was, owning part of it.

I soon learned that old houses carry old problems. Over the years, pipes broke, the roof leaked, and termites invaded. I hadn't given full thought to how I was going to maintain the grounds, an important consideration since one and a half of my acres had caterpillar grass that grew abundantly in that warm climate. I couldn't stay in St. Helena. I had to return to New York and make a living to keep my mortgage payments on time. I used the house as a refuge, going down two or three times a year when I wanted to unwind. It seemed that on each trip there was something new to be fixed. Perhaps my biggest surprise was coming down one year and finding a tree rat dead and laid out on my kitchen floor. It had probably eaten the poison put down for the field mice that seemed to sense the house was empty, so migrated inside each winter.

Did I regret my decision? Sometimes. Did I feel that I was one of the luckiest women on earth? Sometimes. There is always a love/hate relationship with a charming old house. Just when you feel that you're ready to throw in the towel, one of the numerous workmen will comment, "What a great place you've got here." And your heart answers, "Yeah, it is." I learned patience the hard way. Sea Island time is not New York time. Regardless of the crisis, the plumber would say over the phone, "No problem, I'll be there tomorrow." I learned to pin them down to the "tomorrow" of this week, not the next. I tried

to make the house perfect, solving all the glitches on one visit, so that on the next, I could walk in and out without speaking to a single roofer or electrician. I could just take down my “Hers” coffee mug, put my feet up, and swing on the porch swing, forgetting time.

I came to learn that the only perfect thing about my home was the massive oak that stood in the front yard. It was at least three hundred years old and swept the ground with its ancient branches. I named her Old Beauty. If trees didn’t have genders, too bad. This one did. Staring at the tree gave me hope. If she had lasted that long and was still fighting, surely, I could manage the next forty years with patience and resilience. I grew to make peace with the fact that replacing a rotten beam under the back porch was the price I paid for catching my breath in awe of flowering camellias in the winter and blazing azaleas in the early spring.

I promised myself that one day I would write in it. My chance came seven years after buying it. Almost every writer believes there is a “big” book in him or her, and mine was to be an historical novel that I had researched for and had traveled as far as Norway and Senegal to prepare myself. I then had four books under my belt, but this fifth one was it. It was 1996, and I cleared up my affairs in New York. In order to return to St. Helena to write my book and fulfill another dream—making a garden.

I’d collected gardening books since I bought the house and had been waiting for the right time to devote a whole growing season to the project. There was an old greenhouse on the grounds that had fallen into disrepair over the years. I cleaned it up, replaced missing or broken glass panes, and replaced the growing lamps running the length of the shed. I decided to start my garden from seeds. I cleared out a spot on the side of the house that was thirty feet by twenty feet. I took out all of my seed catalogues, began a gardening journal, and went to town—literally. It took several trips in my rented red pickup truck to bring back bags of manure, potting soil,

and humus. What they lacked at the local Walmart, I ordered from my catalogues.

I wonder how many people actually get the chance to act out their fantasies. I was one of them, and can say the feeling is one of complete and utter peace. I would sit at the folded card table in a second-floor room that I used for a study and look at my twenty by thirty patch of tilled soil, feeling there was nothing more in the world that I needed. Literally nothing. I had my writing. I had my two acres of land fronting a shoreline. I had my good health to keep it all going.

The only thing I didn't have was a way to keep those damn cats out of my garden! There was a strange woman, the neighbors called "the cat lady," who had moved into a brick split-level ranch just across the road from me. She had at least twelve cats. They weren't house pets, but roamers. Over the years I'd see them perched up in my oak tree or walking back and forth across the road. I didn't mind until they started using my garden plot as a litter box.

At first I appealed to their owner's good nature. I baked a batch of peanut butter cookies and took them over to her one evening. When I rang the doorbell, she peeped at me from behind the lace curtains at her front window. There was no denying that she was home because her car was parked in the driveway. I rang again, and she finally came to the door and opened it a crack. "I'm your neighbor from across the road," I said to her, "and I thought you might like these." She opened the door fully, and I was astounded by her size. She was a good six feet tall with Brunette hair and exceptionally pale skin. She slouched a little in the way that tall women do from a lifetime of trying to cover their height. She didn't invite me in, and I didn't ask to come in. I just explained the problem I was having with her cats, and she told me that she would fix it. They were probably used to no one being at my place, she

told me, and they'd begun to take it as their own. She'd try to keep them in the house from now on if I would please just leave her alone. I didn't think I was being that much of a bother, but like I said, she was a strange woman.

The next week I didn't see the cats at all. Then one Sunday, when I went out to mark off my garden for the new seedbeds, there was a huge pile of cat dung in the middle of the section I had planned for my tomatoes. I cleaned it up without saying anything. The next day I did the same. I became obsessive with my cat dung patrols. Each morning before my coffee, I'd go out to check. And each time I discovered a clump. It was like a pyrrhic victory. Ah ha—again, I'd think. Whenever I saw one of the stray cats on my property, I'd run downstairs from my study and scare it away. There was one, a gray tail-less Minx, whose size rivaled that of a medium-sized dog, that I found especially troubling. It was certainly the right size to be the culprit for leaving such large piles in my garden soil. It was late January, and I dreaded the moment for setting out the tomato and pepper plants thriving in my greenhouse. On my way there I saw cat shit curled up between the leaves of my zucchini, clinging to the petals of my marigolds. I was seeing cat shit in my dreams. This had to stop!

My next visit to the cat lady was without cookies. She didn't open the door this time, she spoke to me through the window. She was doing what she could, she told me, but her babies needed exercise. I suggested that she put them on a leash and walk them up and down the Avenue of Oaks. This, of course, did not sit well with her, nor did my contention that the huge gray cat was probably the main offender. She would keep Orwell in the house, she told me. And when I reminded her that was the same thing she'd said two weeks before, she disappeared from behind the curtains. At least I had a name for my contender, "Orwell."

I thought about calling the police, but I knew they'd only laugh at me. I tried to find out as much about this woman as I could from the neighbors. Her name was Eunice Simon, and she worked as a paralegal in town. She was unmarried, with no children. She never spoke unless spoken to, and if she had any friends, they weren't on our side of the island. The neighbors put fences up around their gardens and used pepper spray to discourage her cats and suggested I do the same. I stubbornly rejected their advice. It was my land and my garden. Why should I be the one to make concessions?

To add insult to injury, my water heater broke down, and I faced washing up in cold water during the only two really cold months that we had. And my tree rats decided to make a return visit to my attic. The "no problem" plumber took two days to show up, but the exterminator kept his word and came the very afternoon I called. He could put fresh bait in the attic, he told me, but it would be more effective if he could also place them underneath the house. Did I have any pets? Looking back, it seems like a small matter, and I guess I should have left the whole thing alone. But twenty-twenty hindsight is no sight. How could I know that my answer to that question was about to change my life forever? No, I told him, I have no pets.



Dick Simon is not having a good day. He spent the morning in a Senate Intelligence Committee closed session for a hearing on the latest budget proposed by his office in the National Security Agency. Why did he always have to beg those bastards for money? Didn't they understand the importance of what his agency—the NSA—was doing for their country?

He heaves a sigh and spins his chair so he can look out his plate glass window onto the sprawling design of the buildings below. A virtual city lays under his gaze with twenty thousand people employed to do everything from cutting hair to frying hamburgers to deciphering the most sophisticated codes in the world. His city. That's the way he's always thought of Fort Meade—his city.

The plate glass gives him back part of his reflection. He is what could be considered a handsome man. Dark wavy hair, olive skin, and a strange cast of gray eyes that appear larger than they are behind his wire-rimmed glasses. He spins back to his desk and picks up his favorite paperweight, a snow globe, which he shakes vigorously. It usually helps him to relax—watching the white snow swirl around and around, settle, and finally reveal—nothing. That's what his city at Fort Meade is like: a bustle of activity that doesn't really exit outside of its campus.

As Assistant Deputy Director of the NSA, he is the second most important civilian in an organization so secretive that its very charter is still classified as top secret. Its employees, whether cutting hair or deciphering codes, all tell family and friends that they work for the Department of Defense, period. Simon loves that—the ability to be there and not be there. To have privy to almost every form of communication in the world while he sits at the center, holding all those lines in the palm of his hand. Invisible. Invincible. He shakes the glass globe again.

"It comes in threes," is what he told himself that morning after forgetting his badge in his car and not being allowed in the building. Harry has known him for ten years, and he still wouldn't let him in. He must remember to write a memo commending Harry for doing such a great job, regardless of how he had argued. But, then again, that memo might reflect badly on him since he should never have forgotten his badge. He cancels out the memo in his mind. Dick Simon never does anything that will put him in a bad light, regardless of how small.

But it did come in threes: first, the Senate hearing; then, the forgotten badge; and now, a message waiting on his desk from his sister, Eunice, in South Carolina. It's marked "Urgent." And he knows that's a damn lie. There is nothing about Eunice's life that warrants urgency. Maybe he would call her after dinner, or maybe he wouldn't. But then again, maybe one of their relatives had died. They had lost their mother and father several years ago, so that only left a small circle of aunts, uncles, and cousins. None of whom he likes well enough, or is close to enough, to warrant that he call his sister any earlier than after dinner. But then again...

He stops himself. He could have gone on forever, with dozens of variables to entertain for the importance or non-importance of her message. That's how his mind works. It is a curse from his background in mathematics. His explanation ultimately comes down to what he feels, and Dick Simon rarely lets what he feels influence a decision. It's what is practical, what is concrete that matters.

What is pending on his desk? Calls to answer, memos to write, with the most important memo being a summary of his meeting with the Senate Committee. He puts down the snow globe and buzzes for his secretary.

"Come in, Mildred." His speaking voice is low and modulated. People find themselves leaning in toward him to better hear what is only a shade above a whisper. He never raises his voice. Even when angry, it takes on a stillness, a slow cadence that seems to center itself in some depth within his chest.

As Mildred walks in, his long, slender fingers tent themselves in front of his face, a gesture that means he is focusing, deep in thought.

"Sir?" Mildred stands in expectation.

"I want to dictate a memo. And, by the way, how urgent did my sister sound?"

"How urgent, sir?"

Mildred is a competent secretary, but she has the infuriating habit of repeating the last words of any request—her way of being sure she heard the whisper-like voice correctly.

“Yes, how urgent?”

“I couldn’t really say, Mr. Simon. She wasn’t crying this time.”

His face flushes slightly behind its olive tones. When Eunice makes a fool of herself, she, in some ways, was making a fool of him, too. He searches Mildred’s face for sarcasm, but only finds a deadpan professionalism. Well, he thinks, if she wasn’t crying, then it definitely would be an after-dinner call. After dinner—that time of day when he’s driven himself back home to his town house in Dupont Circle and has shut the door on the world and all his problems. Since he’s unmarried and childless, it is a time of total peace. Dinnertime is when he regroups, pulls back the pieces of himself that he’s torn off to give to a hundred problems that make up his day. He is a gourmet cook, and so dinner ingredients are picked up fresh each evening from his favorite specialty market: foie gras, truffles, salmon filets, or whatever else might hit his fancy. A warm plate and a chilled glass of Chardonnay separates the Dick Simon of NSA and the Dick Simon of Dupont Circle.

The Dick Simon of Dupont Circle has a screen saver on his computer made up of Easter bunnies, hopping from one side of the screen to the other. A cascading group of bunnies in all the colors of the rainbow—hop, hop, hopping across his screen. It is the closest he ever comes to a sense of humor. The Dick Simon of the NSA is renowned for not having a sense of humor, and he likes it that way. He is a machine, all work and only work. But his home holds a secret about him that no one at work would ever guess. And keeping a secret from a place whose mission is breaking through secrets is gratifying. When he sits in front of his home computer,

that night after dinner, it gives him his one and only smile of the day. After he has had the equivalent of a good belly laugh, he is ready to call his sister.

“It took you long enough.”

“It was a rough day at the office, Eunice.”

“I don’t know why I bother. You don’t give a damn about anything that concerns me.”

“What is it, Eunice?”

“Orwell is dead. My baby is gone.”

A cat, he thinks. She’s calling me about a damn cat. “Sorry to hear that, Eunice. Was it a peaceful death?”

“He was poisoned.”

“How do you know that?”

“I had an autopsy. It was rat poison. Gloria Naylor killed him.”

“Who’s Gloria Naylor?”

“A woman who lives across the road from me.”

“And how do you know she did it?”

“Because she hated my cats. She told me so. And she hates me, too, because I’m a Jew.”

Here it goes, he thinks. It always comes down to this. I didn’t get the job. I didn’t get the house. I didn’t get the raise because I’m a...loser. His sister is a loser, and that’s the bottom line. A part of him hates her for that, for not finishing law school and ending up a mediocre paralegal. The professors hated her because she was a Jew, but when it turned out that most of them were Jews as well, what did she say then? They were self-hating Jews. They had it out for her from the beginning because of the way she looked, walked, talked—felt. Then there is a part of him that feels deeply and sadly responsible for his sister’s paranoia. Perhaps if he had been a better brother after their parents died. If he hadn’t been so intent on his own career. If only, if only...

“...and then when she left that day, she looked back at me and I saw it in her eyes. I saw it in her face...”

“Eunice, it looks like we’ve both had a long and hard day. Why don’t you rest and we’ll talk about this another time?”

“How did I know that you’d say that? How did I know that was exactly how this conversation would end?”

Eunice decides to take matters in her own hands. She doesn’t know why she went to Dick at all, he has never supported her. It’s times like this that she misses her father desperately. Those long, slender violinist’s hands stroking her back and telling her that everything would be all right. Daddy would fix it.

Well, for good or for bad, she doesn’t have him now. She goes to her phonebook, finds the number for the deputy sheriff, and dials. She wants to report some irregularities that are happening in the house across the road from her. She can’t put her finger on it, but it seems like there are drugs involved. How does she know that? Well, cars are always stopping there from morning to night, and she’s seen boxes being unloaded after midnight. Just a suspicion, but it bears checking out. There, she thinks, hanging up the phone, that should do it.

Deputy Sheriff Miller, a slight man with balding hair, runs his hands over his head. Another call from Eunice Simon. She was always reporting “irregularities,” a strange car she couldn’t identify cruising past her house, a stray dog being sent by a neighbor to torment her cats, strange noises in the middle of the night. The woman was a squirrel, no doubt about it. But he was obligated to check out any suspicion of drug dealing. It was becoming rampant on the island. What had once been a quiet place where people didn’t even bother to lock their front doors was slowly becoming an armed camp. Neighborhood watch teams, alarm systems, and attack dogs were now the norm.

He turns to his computer and runs the name she had given him. Gloria Naylor. It comes up with nothing, not even an overdue parking ticket. It still doesn't mean anything. There were a lot of drug users and pushers who were yet to run foul of the law.

The next day he does a little discrete investigation of the woman who lives next to the Coffin Point plantation house. The description he gets of the woman peaks his interest. She's a writer. She's black. And she wears dreadlocks. Some kind of radical, that was for sure, but not necessarily dealing. Then again, how could she afford a place like that on that end of the island without some major help? You didn't pay for a place like that on welfare checks. Perhaps it will be best to turn this tip over to the Drug Enforcement Agency. Those DEA guys had the means that he doesn't to get to the bottom of things. They've even been known to do a little unofficial snooping around before going back to a place with a search warrant. Miller picks up the phone and makes the call.



At first I didn't notice anything unusual. January was a peaceful month for me. I spent it sorting my research books into different piles in the order I needed to read them. I began working on the plans for my garden layout in my gardening journal. Those were uneventful days that brought me comfort with their regularity. Up at eight with a cup of coffee in the "Hers" mug while looking out my sun porch window at Old Beauty and the water. Both sides of my house gave me a special view. If I sat up on the second floor in a little room off the bedroom, there were two ancient cedars, which framed the outline of my garden below, and McTeer Drive, the road that ran north and south past the back of the house. I had finally decided to put some real furniture in my house. So dur-

ing the afternoons I got into my red pickup truck and drove to some of the county's many businesses that sold old furniture. It took several trips because these shops held everything from junk to beautiful estate pieces. My taste—and pocketbook—ran more to the middle range: good solid used furniture that I carted back in my truck. I thought it appropriate; old houses should have old furniture pieces with a spirit and a history.

In early evenings, I visited my greenhouse to check on the seedlings of tomatoes, peppers, and marigolds that I had started. Then, an early dinner, some music, and to bed at about ten o'clock or so. And so my days went—nothing special or earth-shattering, but they brought me contentment.

One day I returned from Walmart and noticed that my front door was unlocked. I had left a carpenter in the house replacing the doors to my kitchen cabinets while I made the quick run to town. Perhaps he had forgotten to turn the latch and slam the door to lock it. Coming from New York, I had never felt insecure on St. Helena, but there was some concern because of the news of increasing break-ins on the island. Also, on one of my long absences, someone had come in through a window and stolen my TV. I entered the house with my antennas up. Nothing was missing, but I noticed that someone had been tampering with a box of garden seeds I'd left on the sun porch. The edges were curled up as if someone had tried to pry it open.

A quick tour of the house led me to discover a small red and white flashlight left on the mantle of the fireplace in the living room. My concern deepened. Why on earth would anyone look up my fireplace? The third and final sign of an intruder was found on the second floor. There was insulation lying on the floor under the trap door to the attic. I had not been up in that attic for weeks, but someone else had. The question would plague me several times in the coming months. Why? You come into a house, check seed

packages, look up a fireplace, and open the attic door. What could you possibly be looking for? Nothing was taken. Nothing except those three signs was out of place.

A brief call to the carpenter confirmed that he had never left the kitchen area. He'd put on the new cabinet facings and gone home. So I guessed that left the Boogie Man! As I sat listening to my music that evening, I began to wonder if I should be so cavalier about my safety. St. Helena wasn't New York, but crazies were everywhere. And I was out in the sticks with little security. Maybe I'd need better locks, a new alarm system. I hated having to think that way, but St. Helena was changing, and in some ways, not for the better. After my usual glass of wine, I banked the fire in the fireplace and went to bed.

The next morning, I was out in my garden roping off the area for my new asparagus bed when I saw the footprints. Dog prints were all in my garden, and at the edge of my asparagus bed was a human footprint. I knew it couldn't be mine because it had taken me four hours to prepare that bed. When you're planting asparagus, you have to dig deep—at least a foot and a half down, and mound the dirt to take the roots. I wouldn't have walked anywhere near that bed after I'd prepared it. So, who could have been walking in my garden with a dog—or dogs? And again, why?

Paranoia is a slow poison, and a lethal one. It usually starts with small things and then grows to color almost everything in your life. A harmless incident takes on gigantic proportions until "they" are everywhere and "it" is waiting to get you around every corner. As a native New Yorker, I had my healthy share of paranoia, and I like to think it kept me out of dangerous situations. When that little red light goes off in your brain, you glance over your shoulder at the sound of swiftly approaching feet. You take a cab instead of the subway after a night out with friends. Sometimes, your suspi-

cions pan out, and other times you'll never know if they did. The running footsteps turn out to be a jogger, or someone trying to catch a bus. But was there someone—or something—waiting on that subway that you avoided? A true paranoid is convinced that there was. A healthy person forgets the whole thing as he settles down into his cab ride.

I didn't want paranoia to spoil my hard-earned year on the island. Maybe I was reading too much into what a third party could easily explain away. I tuned to my neighbor, Betty. Betty was a true character. Born in Texas, she had come to St. Helena 40 years before to raise her children. "I thought I'd stay for ten years," she'd say. "It was a good place for kids, but now they're all gone and I'm still stuck here. And there are too many burrs in this grass for me to go around barefoot like I did in Texas." She could always make me laugh, calling herself a barefoot hillbilly from a town with no hills. One thing was for sure, she knew everyone and just about everything that went on in our part of the island.

I laid out my story to her, and her clear brown eyes were troubled.

"There's been talk," she said. "A sheriff's deputy was calling around not too long ago, asking questions about you."

"What kind of questions?"

"Just who you were. How long you been here. That kind of thing."

She was having trouble meeting my eyes. The evasiveness disturbed me. Betty was one of the most straight forward people I knew.

"If I were you," she said. "I'd just leave it alone. Things will die down soon."

But I didn't want to leave it alone. If people were talking about me, I wanted to know what they were saying. However, I realized she had given me about as much as I was going to get on

this visit. She walked me back out to the porch. We stood there for a moment, taking in the beauty of St. Helena Sound as the bright winter sun sparkled on its surface.

"Sometimes, I just hate small towns," she said. "People can be very cruel. They don't have much to talk about, so they just fill their mouths with nonsense. You're welcome here anytime, Gloria. I've always told you that. I meant it before and I mean it now."

"You know, Betty," I said, "someone has come into my home without permission. They've brought dogs into my garden, and I think I should know the reason why."

"I think you should, too," she said. "But I'm the wrong person to ask. Maybe you should have a talk with Eunice."

And she turned and went back into the house. Eunice again. Every snag in my plans to spend a peaceful year in St. Helena was somehow tied to that woman. I had relented and taken up the rat poison from beneath the house after a couple of weeks because I didn't really want to hurt her cats. I just wanted them out of my life, like I wanted her now. Out of my life. Here she was appearing again like a bad penny.

I made a large fire in the fireplace later that evening and sat staring at it. It cleared my mind to watch the yellow flames burn blue and then silver, as the fragrant cedar logs crackled and hummed while burning down. The word came to me out of nowhere—Drugs. They had been in my house, searching for drugs because of some lie Eunice must have told. I was furious and started to march over to her house that very minute to confront her. But what good would it do? She was a nut, that's all—a nut case. I would only be aggravating myself for nothing. I felt a flush of shame that my neighbors would believe that someone like me would be dealing drugs. I had worked hard for this, hard for this little bit of peace that I was trying to wrench out of life. I got myself another glass of wine. This was a day that definitely called for three glasses of wine. I got nice and mellow and went to bed.

That would have been the end of it if I hadn't spotted her in the Winn Dixie supermarket that Saturday. She was easy to spot as tall as she was. She was shopping with another woman, who was short and had masses of red hair. We were in the produce section. She had her cart filled with about 50 cans of cat food and two 20 pound bags of kitty litter. Lying on top of all that was a single bunch of celery. I ought to take that celery and slap her with it, I thought. She was turning her cart around to head for the checkout line when I intercepted it with mine.

"Hello, Eunice," I said. "It looks like we're both doing a little bit of shopping."

She didn't say anything and tried to maneuver past me.

"By the way," I continued, "I'm having a party at my house and wondered if you could come."

"No." She glared at me. "I won't be able to make it."

"But I didn't tell you when it was."

"It doesn't matter. I can't come."

"But surely, it would be right up your alley. It's a drug party—heroin, coke, uppers. You know, all those things the police were looking for in my house. They were in my house, Eunice, did you know that?"

She turned about three different shades of red.

"Stop harassing me," she said with her lips pressed close together.

"Harassing you? You call the police with lies about me and I'm harassing you?"

"Look," she said. "Your problems are your problems. And if the police were in your house, you brought it on yourself. Now, get out of my way."

She jerked her cart around mine and headed off at full speed, her confused friend in tow. She suddenly stopped and spun around to face me, and shouted, "Murderer!" And then she was off again.

“Just shove it, you bitch,” I said, throwing a head of cabbage into my cart.

My heart was pounding and my hands trembled a bit. For the first time in my life, I had made a scene, and I should have known better. The one thing I liked about the South was its civility, and I had hardly been civil. But then again, neither had she.



Dick Simon is up early for his morning run. It's a glorious Saturday with the air crisp and cold, just the way he likes it. He'll do an hour—it is always exactly an hour—in Rock Creek Park before returning home to shower and make the lunch shift at the homeless shelter in Adams Morgan. He's been volunteering at the shelter since coming to Washington ten years ago. Before that it was a shelter in Roxbury when he lived in Boston and was earning his doctorate at MIT. He goes to the shelters to remind himself what can happen if he's not careful. With the slightest misstep, there you go, back into the gutter. Not that he had started at the bottom—his parents had been concert musicians, but the bottom was always waiting. One slip, and you slide right pass where you started and to the bottom. The bottom. It was even in his nightmares. One typo on an office memorandum and there he was, sliding... sliding...

He's heading for the door when the phone rings. Something tells him not to answer, let the machine pick it up. Something tells him it's Eunice, and she'll call back, would keep calling every hour until she reached him. He could have his run in peace if he ignores that phone. It could begin his day off from work in the way he's looked forward to all week. In the way he's earned.

He's slipping his keys into the pocket of his Armani sweat suit when the machine clicks on.

“I know you're there. Pick up the phone. This is important.”

It's always important, Eunice, he thinks. I have never gotten a call from you, a message, a card, when it wasn't important. Urgent. Needy. He feels a flush of shame at the way he's thinking. She is, after all, his sister—his baby sister. They are both unmarried and childless. All they've had is each other since their parents' tragic car accident. He's tried to be there for his sister, to reassure her, to tell her that she still has someone to lean on, that someone is still left in the world to love her. But Eunice has a void in her life that no one's love can fill. She's worse than the bottom. She's a bottomless pit that sucks in all you have to give and berates you for not giving more. And somehow, Dick can never shake the feeling that it's his fault. He was only 16 when their parents died and had tried to fill their shoes, but he had been a miserable failure at it. Eunice is his one mistake that he keeps hidden from the world he moves in. Because of that, he fears her. Somehow, some way, she could drag him down to the bottom where he won't be of any use to her or anyone else.

"I said, pick up the phone, Dick. Pick up the..."

"Good morning, Eunice. I was just on my way out the door."

"You can run anytime. This is important."

"What is it?"

"She called me a Jew bitch in the supermarket today."

"Who called you a Jew bitch?"

"The woman who killed my cat. She shouted it out in the supermarket. Everybody heard her. Hillary was with me if you don't believe it. I have Hillary right here. She can tell you."

Simon heaves a deep sigh. Hillary, her partner in crime.

"Hi, Dick. How ya doing?"

"What happened, Hillary?"

"Well, there was this argument or something about drugs."

"Drugs?"

“Yeah. And then... I didn’t hear it all, but she did say bitch. That I heard... But, Eunice, I didn’t exactly hear her say ‘Jew bitch.’ I heard...”

Eunice is back on the line. “It was Jew bitch, that’s what it was. I told you she hated me, and that’s why she killed Orwell. I told you. Maybe now you’ll believe me.” Eunice starts to cry. “It was awful. In front of all those people.”

And so it goes, he thinks. And so it goes.

“Eunice, listen to me. You’re 36 years old, and you know that the world is full of bigots. And it seems like this woman is one. Just say to hell with it and go on with your day. Go on with your life, for God’s sake.”

Now the day is ruined. As he takes his run, her voice is reverberating in his head. He is neither proud nor ashamed to be a Jew. It is what he was, and he accepts it with the same matter of factness that he accepts his hair color or his eyes. His parents hadn’t been religious people, and neither was he. But Eunice had decided to become Orthodox in her late twenties, wrapping herself in a cloak of righteousness he was sure would pass like other fads she’d picked up and discarded throughout most of her life. At one time, she was even practicing Buddhism. Simon had practiced nothing but self-preservation; set a goal, aim for it, and, by God, hit it. Let nothing stand in your way, least of all your ethnicity. That’s how he’s risen so far—and so fast—in the Agency.

His feet pound on the graveled path as he flies past the clumps of ash and pine trees. The cold air stings his face as he forces himself to speed up just a little bit more. That’s it, just a little bit more. He’d first come to Forte Meade on twice yearly seminars, part of a temporary think-tank. They drew the country’s best minds to discuss applications of the latest scientific theories on cryptology and code-breaking. He’d felt exhilarated to be away from the stuffy climate of MIT, to be at a place where his doctor-

ate in mathematics could be used to tie into the real world. Because he'd taken a little extra time with his papers, given just a little bit more, he'd stood out. Those papers got him a position as head of Research and Development. It took only five years to become assistant to the Deputy Director, and he gave himself another five before reaching Deputy Director, the highest post that a civilian can hold at the National Security Agency. None of this would have happened if he'd run around screaming "victim" like his sister did all the time.

He finishes his run and decides to forgo the shelter this one time. He'll go to the office and do some work. There were always letters to answer, memos to be composed. Work is his salvation. No, it's more than that. Work is what he is at the core. Working takes his mind off failure. Yes pulling his Lexus into an assigned parking space, donning his green badge, and walking through those triple set of gates can take his mind off of anything that even comes close to failure.



It was February. In the Sea Islands that means that you can already smell the beginning of spring. My greenhouse tables were full of young seedlings, and I would start my day by checking on their growth. I marveled at how quickly the marigolds were taking root. The frail tomato seedlings were just beginning to show their saw-tooth leaves, so different from the pepper plants, whose spear-shaped leaves were finally gaining some size.

I had agreed to speak at the Marine base on Parris Island, a short trip from St. Helena Island, for Black History Month and, as with all engagements, a part of me regretted having to go as the time approached. I had been told I was a forceful speaker, but shades of my childhood shyness would usually rear its head and give

me butterflies as the event neared. But the young female Marine who had contacted me was deferential and extremely polite, and I reasoned that it would be my way of giving back to a part of the community that contained avid fans. The theme of the luncheon was black women and their contributions. There were about 100 people in attendance, mainly members of St. Helena's black middle class and a good share of young black male and female Marines.

When it was my turn to take the dais, I spoke about the strength of black women but reminded the audience that we could never look at the black woman without giving credit to the contributions of black men. The Million Man March had just taken place that previous October, and it was an event that moved me deeply. The sight of hundreds of thousands of black men brought back memories of my father, who had died in 1993. I thought about him coming home red-eyed and tired from his shift as a subway motor-man, flecks of steel dust embedded in his beard and skin. But he still kept persevering because of his belief that a responsible man took care of his family. A true man never quit. There in the capitol were all those black men making the same statement. I told them it brought tears to my eyes.

The next day Betty came over to the house, carrying a copy of *The Beaufort Gazette*. "Look, you made the papers."

I had made it in a big way. On the front page was a long account about me and my speech—"Revered Author Speaks At Parris Island." It was an accurate account of the event, which is unusual for a newspaper, and the picture wasn't bad either. I'd received lots of publicity over the course of my career, and I was always of two minds about it. On one hand, it's flattering to have people pay attention to you. On the other, you can't let yourself get a swollen head and live only with the image of yourself in other people's minds. I was quite pleased with the piece but reminded myself that it's easy to be a big fish in a small pond, and the article was placed *below* the fold.

“So we’re living with a celebrity, huh,” Betty said.

“Hardly a celebrity,” I answered, but I thought, *Maybe now some of my neighbors will have second thoughts about the gossip going around that I’m dealing drugs. Yeah, I thought, let them see this.* Betty gave me the article as a souvenir. I filed it away with my other papers, forgot about it, and went back to my plants.



When Dick Simon arrives at work there is already a pile of mail stacked on his desk. His secretary always sorts it from the least important to the most important with the least important on the bottom. At the end of the pile is a newspaper clipping from *The Beaufort Gazette* with a note attached from Eunice. A double-underlined “FYI” is scrawled across the yellow post-it. Also, she has highlighted the name Gloria Naylor. On the second page of the clipping she had highlighted the sentence, “She cried when seeing the Million Man March.”

Simon flips back to the picture of a round-faced, dark-skinned woman, smiling into the camera. Eunice had never told him she was black. The thought had never crossed his mind. He had just assumed... Simon frowns deeply. Could there be something to what Eunice has been saying all along?

He turns to his computer with a graphic of a closed vault on the screen. He types in his password and the vault door opens. This lets him into the entire network of the NSA, but he’s looking for something deeper. He consults a sheet that has passwords sectioned according to the time of day in ten minute intervals. This sheet is shredded each day and a new one composed. It is not enough to know a password for this inner vault; you have to know what time of day to use it. The second vault door swings open when he types in the correct password, and now he’s into the heart of the NSA—almost. There is a third door, but he need not concern him-

self with that now. He types in the name Gloria Naylor, and a list of roughly 50 names is scrolled in front of him. Only one is in blue, on the Watch List. He clicks on that name and there she is—a photo, a social security number, and a synopsis. Every black, Latino, and Asian writer who has had any press coverage is on the NSA's Watch List. This list was allegedly disbanded back in the 70s, so now it is a list that doesn't exist inside of the NSA. The synopsis details in brief the subject of the books they have written. Anything political is highlighted in red. There are no red sections for the Naylor woman. It seems that she writes about black people, black women in particular, with little political agenda. No connection to the Nation of Islam, no connection to anyone. But yet, she hates Jews. He looks at the newspaper clipping again. She is a sympathizer of Louis Farrakhan, that's certain, and she is getting press for it in that hayseed of a town. What did Eunice expect? It was South Carolina, for God's sake. Maybe this bore a little more investigation. He turns to his computer again and under her profile, he enters "Activate" in the Status line and under Duration, "To be determined."

By the end of the day at least half a dozen people will be put to work. All of her books are assigned to readers for a detailed synopsis of each one. Every newspaper article, every book review, is to be read and analyzed. In the field, a low level Code 2 surveillance is to be set up. She is to be followed wherever she goes in Beaufort, with a report to be filed about her destination and whatever groups she speaks to. Files from the FBI and CIA are ordered. And just to be thorough, a background check going to her college days. Yes, by the end of the day, Gloria Naylor's life will become, no pun intended, an open book.

That should just about do it, Simon thinks as he closes the second vault door. All that's left is a call to Eunice. He would hate to tell her that she might have been right all along. No, he would

wait on that. Let the reports come in, and he would offer her that bit of intelligence as a gift.



It wasn't until February that I noticed I was being followed. I was on Ribault Road near the government complex, on my way to have a nicked front windshield checked at the dealership. While stopping for a red light on the intersection of Highway 21, a man with Brunette hair and a woman with shoulder-length, fluffy brown hair, looked away attempting to hide their faces, the instant I peered into my rearview mirror. This alerted me that something was amiss. Then several artificial moves were performed by the couple. The woman applied lipstick, kissed the man, applied lipstick again. They did not have the body language of people so taken with each other that they kiss publicly. I faked a left turn into the government complex on Highway 21, and they sped off. My intuition was confirmed half an hour later when I left the dealership. There was the same gold Honda, pulling out from a side-road and staying three car lengths away from me. When I turned, they turned. When I sped up, they sped up. I thought the tail originated with the Sheriff's office, and that it was about that drug business again. The Honda left me when I turned into Coffin Point Road and headed for my home.

I decided to take the bull by the horns and go visit the Sheriff's office the next day. They had no right to be tailing me without cause, and if they felt there was cause, I should be able to face my accuser. The Sheriff was not in, but I talked, for some length, with Deputy Sheriff Miller. He stated emphatically that the Sheriff's office was not behind these incidences. They wouldn't bring drug-sniffing dogs into my garden, he said. They would never come into my home without a warrant. He also said he knew

Eunice Simon and didn't think that she could have instigated these incidents.

I did not believe Deputy Sheriff Miller.

Why? Because it was clear that he was a decent man. There was occasionally deep concern in his eyes as I spoke about my ordeal. Then he would become a bit gruff and defensive and he couldn't meet my eyes at all when he stated that Eunice couldn't be behind this. Yes, all the signs of a decent man. Not once did I see amusement or confusion in his eyes. Those are the signs to look for when a seasoned cop encounters a wild story from a slightly deranged woman who pops into his office. I went home dejected. If the police weren't going to help, who could I turn to? I was basically alone in St. Helena. I had a few social contacts there, but no one who I could go to with this. My friends and support system were in New York, for the most part. And I certainly wasn't going back home after only two months. No, I would weather this the best way I knew how. Perhaps, Betty's advice was best—just let things calm down. I tried to follow that advice, but then the parade of cars began to drive past my house.



Barry Levine doesn't like the report he'll send to Dick Simon. The Naylor woman has spotted the tail and gone to the police. How could she have done that? Just luck, he thinks, nothing but dumb luck. He takes his fingers out of his mouth and looks at the thumb cuticle that's starting to bleed. A lousy habit, chewing his nails when he's nervous, and he has a lot to be nervous about. Dick Simon is not a man who accepts failure—in anything and for any reason. Levine could lose his job over this, and he likes his job. He runs the South Carolina office of the NSA out of an antique store in Columbia. Straight out of college, he's only held the position for

nine months, and it suits his temperament. He liked the quiet, laid-back work environment, the short winters and long summers, and up until now, he hasn't had much to do except sort through news clippings and file reports on skinheads, the militia movement, the KKK, and other assorted nut balls sprinkled throughout the state. Writers were rare. And a black woman writer, living in a sleepy town like Beaufort, rarer. Not rarer—unique. His only one, ever. And to have to report that he messed it up was unthinkable. The only thing the woman did was make trips to Walmart and gardening supply stores.

Another unthinkable crosses his mind: what if he just left out the visit to Deputy Miller? A lousy half-hour meeting that showed she was paranoid, that no one was tailing her, looking for drug connections. But you don't do things like that. You never did things like that. It could backfire. What if she kept going to the police? What if she started writing and calling congressmen and senators? She would be dismissed as a nutcase, that's true, but then Levine would have no record of where it began. Do you white out the second visit or the third? What do you do if she actually gets on a plane and goes to Washington, D.C., to meet some lame-brained congressman? How do you explain where it all began? Unlikely, true. But people can surprise you. You never give them the benefit of the doubt. Expect the worst, that's Levin's motto. The worst that could happen when Dick Simon gets his report is dismissal—no, that's not true—reassignment. Yes, the worst would be to get sent to Minnesota or some other God-awful state where it snowed all the time and the wind froze your butt like an icicle.

He decides to file his report, but the trick is to insinuate that the home office has tied his hands. A Code 2 surveillance only requires a team of cars on two twelve-hour shifts. Given the nature of the place and the luck of the target, a higher code would be needed. A Code 3 would let him tap her phone and beef up the surveil-

lance to determine if she's getting intelligence from somewhere, and it's not his fault that he's restricted to a Code 2.

Dick Simon is not a happy camper when he gets Barry Levine's report. It's one lousy woman, living alone, and that asshole couldn't keep tabs on her? The nerve of that worm—the unmitigated nerve to suggest that it was his fault, that he hadn't placed the right code on the operation. Simon picks up his snow globe and tosses it from hand to hand. The book reports were all in and the only red flag he had seen was in a novel called *Bailey's Cafe*. She had written about an Ethiopian Jew, a Russian Jew, and the founding of the state of Israel. "A sympathetic portrait," the report had said. That remained to be seen. It also said that she criticized Israel for not admitting Ethiopian Jews when the state was first founded. What right did she have to criticize Israel at all? It definitely supported the fact that she was a sympathizer of the Nation of Islam and Louis Farrakhan. But did it justify a Code 3? Had that worm sent him anything—anything that proved she was a subversive and anti-Semite, while it was clear that she was both? She hadn't made contact with the Black Muslims, who had a chapter in Beaufort county. She hadn't been seen buying a copy of their newspaper, *The Final Call*. He had nothing but a botched surveillance.

The snow globe moves faster and faster between Simon's two hands. Faster and faster. If he authorizes a Code 3 now, it gives credence to Levine's report that somehow he, Simon, had made a bad call from the beginning. But then again, it might pick up intelligence from her phone calls that she's an anti-Semite, which would justify the whole business. But you can't initiate a Code 3 without getting something from a Code 2. Something. Anything. That is what he would tell Levine: Bring me something. Except that now she knows she's being watched, she would be more careful. Well,

that wasn't Simon's problem. Let Levine do his job, put on a surveillance with people who didn't have their thumbs up their asses. Make her think it has all gone away. She's on a Code 2 and will stay on a Code 2 until Levine brings him something.

Barry Levine knows that his operation is doomed. Once a target knows that he's being followed, it's much easier for him to pick up a tail. Especially when it's a lousy Code 2 with only two teams working. The Naylor woman was getting help from somewhere, and his hands were tied. What if he stopped the surveillance for a couple of days, let her relax, and then put it back on? But his assignment called for a daily report—no exceptions. The answer is not to cut back, but to accelerate the coverage. How in the hell was he going to do that while still burdened with only Code 2? The cuticles around his thumbs are bleeding more from his gnawing on them. He puts his thumb in his mouth and sucks on the salty blood. Dick Simon is doing this on purpose, he knows that now, because he wants to take away his job. The man never liked him, never gave him any support.

The chimes on the front door of the shop ring as a delivery man brings in a shipment of boxes. It's the Fiesta Ware he's been waiting for. Unwrapping the dishes, he thinks back to when he was a child and his mother took out the Fiesta Ware for Passover. That's when he gets the idea of the Anti-Defamation League. He has a cousin who works out of their Columbia office. Surely Yuri could be of some help. The ADL keeps files on people, lots of people. Maybe the Naylor woman is one of them.

The phone rings only twice.

"Yuri, it's Barry. Long time no hear from."

"Not a red cent. You still owe me fifty dollars."

"This call isn't about money."

"It should be. Where's my loan?"

"It's coming. Listen, this is important. I want you to check your files for a Gloria Naylor."

"And...?"

"See if she's in there. Any ties to the Nation of Islam. Louis Farrakhan."

"Mister Big-time, working for the Department of Defense. Don't you have your own files?"

"Yuri, I know this is a big favor..."

"Not as big as my fifty dollars."

"Yuri, my job depends on this."

"You're not kidding, are you?"

"I've never been more serious in my life."

"Okay, hold on..."

Levine starts gnawing on his thumb as he waits. Yuri returns after five minutes or so.

"Clean as a whistle."

"Nothing?"

"Nada."

Levine sees his job swirling down a toilet bowl, round and round and round. Gone.

"Yuri, listen, I have reasons to believe—good reasons—that this woman is a threat."

"Tell me more."

"For security reasons I can't go into great detail. But there's evidence that she's a supporter of Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam."

"So she's black?"

"And a writer. This much I can say, because it's public knowledge, her books have elements of anti-Semitism. She's someone we need to watch."

"Where does she live?"

"Beaufort. St. Helena Island."

“Home grown? So we have a local bigot.”

“No, she’s from New York. She has a second home down here. And that’s where she’s about to stir up trouble.”

“Do you know Rabbi Geller?”

“He wont’ be any help.”

“In a case like this, he might. I’ll give him a call. See what we can do for you.”

Rabbi Geller is listening to Mozart when his phone rings. He often does this in the middle of the day when he needs to think deeply about some affair for the synagogue. Today it’s the budget: how to make dollars stretch to cover the expenses for the renovation of the roof and the additional room for the women’s auxiliary. He can’t take it out of his living expenses; they were strapped as it was. A wife and two kids to send to college means debt, heavy debt. Maybe he could shave something off the community outreach fund.

He takes off his glasses, rubs the bridge of his nose, and stretches his long legs to loosen the cramps. Only forty years old, and his body becomes a mass of knots when he is disturbed. Exercise would do the trick, but the only activity he enjoys is an occasional game of basketball with the youths. The St. Helena Reformed Synagogue prides itself on its relationship with the other churches and the poor of the county. It holds seminars on black and Jewish relations, social mixes with the Baptist Church, and basketball games.

The phone, just like the bills that are running through Rabbi Geller’s head, doesn’t stop. He picks it up reluctantly.

It’s Yuri Levine, and his tale is a long one. There is a situation on St. Helena that needs to be dealt with. An outside agitator has moved down from New York with an agenda to help recruit members for the nation of Islam. No, she can’t be ignored because it’s a known fact that she hates Jews, and she’s determined to stir

up trouble. She has even gotten *The Beaufort Gazette* to help her spread her propaganda. Did he remember the Million Man March? Rabbi Geller sighs. The Million Man March. How could he forget it? The sight of all those black men, assembled on behalf of Louis Farrakhan, had sent a chill up his spine. If he could recruit a million, that meant there were ten million who'd stayed at home who subscribed to his philosophy. It was the coup of the decade. Rabbi Geller didn't blame the black community for being misled; he blamed the news media for giving Farrakhan so much press. He had spread his message right on the six o'clock news and with the help of idiots like Larry King. Separate. Agitate. That was not going to help the black community.

You form coalitions for progress; you bridge gaps by holding out your hands to the people who want to befriend you. That's what Rabbi Gellar has been trying to do in St. Helena for the last ten years—bridge gaps. He knew about the local chapter of the Nation of Islam. They were small and ineffectual, and he had worked hard to make sure they stayed that way. His synagogue wanted to help black people, but Louis Farrakhan was telling them to help themselves by leaving well-meaning whites like him out in the cold.

He doesn't let Yuri know, but he has seen the article about this woman. Several members of his congregation had written to the editor asking them to print no more stories about her. That was the best way, just let her wither on the vine.

But Yuri saved the best for last: the Department of Defense is very interested in this woman. How interested? Very interested. Enough to have her watched. Now they were asking the ADL for help, and the ADL was coming to him. She can destroy you, Yuri tells him, destroy all you've been working for. The only thing they are asking him to do is provide a little manpower from his congregation to help them watch her. Nobody wants trouble; they just

want to nip things in the bud—a simple surveillance that would be coordinated from their office in Columbia.

Rabbi Geller's tape of Mozart's *Opus in a Minor* has played out. His leg cramps are worsening. Still, he says, "yes."



In early march I noticed that the traffic pattern near my home had changed. To call anything "traffic" on that part of the island is really a stretch. Coffin Point Road dead ends at McTeer Drive, and the only cars to come down that far were driven by the few people heading home on Saltwind Drive. The Coffin Point plantation house and my house sat on the water; there was nothing beyond us. There was a small amount of traffic from the oyster factory further down McTeer Drive, but it was only evident in the evenings when the trucks, carrying the day's work, were leaving. On a busy day I would sit in my study and see one car every two or three hours. In March, I was seeing three or four cars every hour and it was always the same pattern. A car would come up Coffin Point Road, turn left on McTeer Drive, cruise to the end, turn around, and drive back out. It was clear that the drivers were casing out my house. I had that same question with no clear answer—Why? I knew it wasn't the Sheriff's office because the cars were clearly driven by civilians. It was also civilians who were following me into the post office and the hardware store. Many of them were young white males or females, rank amateurs.

After a while I stopped caring about why surveillance was going on. It was simply making me angry, and distracting me from my work. I called my agent in New York and told him what was going on. He gave me the name of a lawyer in Charleston who might help me stop this harassment. Peter Wills was very helpful. He said that whoever was behind this was doing something illegal,

and that I should start taking down the license plate numbers of the cars that I suspected. If I was down in the garden, I kept a paper and pen in my pocket, and when a car drove by in the usual pattern, I would run to the road and note the license plate. The only affect this had was to make the cars speed up as I headed for the road.

I started to wonder if in some crazy, convoluted way Eunice was behind this as well. These could be friends of hers that she sent to harass me. But that didn't make any sense. There was something else as well that didn't make any sense. Of the many cars that kept coming and going on my road, most were driven by Jews. At first I thought that this particular pattern was all in my mind. I saw no reason why members of the Jewish community would take the time to come to the far end of the island just to drive past my house. But as the license plate numbers grew and the faces in the cars grew, there was no denying this fact. Perhaps, if I wasn't from New York, it would have escaped my notice. But I grew up learning the difference between Hasidic, Israeli, and American Jews. American Jews had been my teachers and mentors, and some of them were my friends. It was Jews in those cars, and for some reason, they had developed an interest in me.

My feelings about how much of this to reveal to Peter Wills were mixed. Part of my hesitation was fear—to be branded an anti-Semite meant a slow death to my career in New York publishing circles. Jews may fight among each other, but when they felt their interests were threatened, most of them came together in a network of silent consensus that the problem must be rooted out—whatever the problem and whoever was causing it. Presidents and Prime Ministers had bowed to his type of pressure, so who was I to think that I could pit myself against it? I had only a handful of contacts. I also had a smaller fear that I would actually be spreading anti-Semitism if I spoke about what I knew. There were many people in this country who thought badly of Jews, regardless of what

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they did, and wouldn't I just be adding more fuel to the fire? But then there was a part of me, the greater part of me, that wanted this thing stopped. It was infuriating to think that any people for any reason felt they had the right to harass and torment me when I had done nothing to them. I was on St. Helena, growing tomatoes and writing a book, for God's sake. Was that a crime?

After some thought, I decided to write a letter to Peter Wells detailing what I had observed.

March 25, 1996

Dear Peter:

It was a pleasure meeting you last week and I've given much thought to our conversation. I've attached a sheet with the license plate numbers of the cars that I'm certain are being used in my surveillance. I've followed your advice and not gone to the police about this matter because I have no definite proof. But what I do have are my powers of observation, honed by over seventeen years of being a writer, and they are pretty reliable. As far as I can determine, there are three levels behind this situation:

- 1) Private citizens
- 2) A private security agency
- 3) Government participation

On the attached sheet I have given you the times and places of the "official" cars that are following me. However, what I have not noted in my records are the numbers of private citizens involved in this whole business. As a pattern began to take shape, I realized that part of their purpose was to confuse the issue and, more importantly, to confuse me about what

Gloria Naylor

I am seeing. If I were to run to the Sheriff's office with a list of license plates that included some of the most reputable members of the Beaufort community, I would be tagged as a paranoid lunatic. If I were to state my observations that the private vehicles were almost always driven by Jewish Americans, they would label me an anti-Semite to boot. But it is happening and this is the pattern: I am always in the middle of a formation when I leave home, with cars in front of me and behind me, and with cars coming very fast toward me and turning on either side. Why? God knows. Whoever thought this up must have some sort of military training. "Contain the objective" or whatever. It's a pattern that plays itself out if I'm at home, in my car, or at a restaurant.

I hope you find the attached notes to be useful. I've tried to be as clear as I can, and I'm trying extremely hard to remain calm. We'll speak after you receive this letter.

Best,
Gloria

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Yuri Levine doesn't know what to do with the copy of Gloria Naylor's letter that's sitting on his desk. Be careful what you pray for was the first thought that came to mind. On one hand it gave him what his cousin Barry was looking for—proof that the woman was an anti-Semite. On the other hand, it blew their operation right out of the water. He shakes his head as he looks at the list of license plate numbers. She's wrong about the private security agency, and a lot of the numbers are pure drivel. But how to explain the numbers she's gotten right on target and with the time

and locations? Jesus, if Rabbi Geller sees this he'll shit in his pants. He's already jumpy enough about her running out to the road and taking notes. It is all Yuri can do to convince himself that the woman was a nut job and nothing could come of her suspicions. No, this one wasn't crazy, just damn lucky. But what could she do with that luck? Nothing was the answer, absolutely nothing. If she and that loser she'd hired in Charleston ran the plates, it wouldn't reach back to the ADL. They didn't mark your motor vehicle records Jew, non-Jew, or Alien. There would be names wouldn't there, a list of Jewish names. So, a Jew didn't have a right to take a Sunday drive to that part of the island? To go into a hardware store? To eat a fucking Dairy Queen ice cream cone? All of this only confirms why he's glad he works for the ADL. America was full of bigots who hated them. And the work he did was important because it wasn't always in-your-face bigotry; it could be the sneaky kind, the kind that this Naylor woman possessed. If they watched her long enough and hard enough, other things would come to light. They would have to. The truth would always come out. But how much of this to give to Barry? He'd send the first page of the letter without the license plate addendum and see how that would hold.

There are two telephone lines in Barry Levine's antique shop—one for the business he runs as a cover and one that is secure and for the National Security Agency. As he's dusting off his Tiffany lamp collection, the business phone rings. It's Yuri.

"Did you get the letter I sent you? I haven't heard back."

"It was a piece of crap."

"Crap? It gives you what you're looking for."

"She blew our surveillance, and she blew yours as well."

"The woman is seeing Jews everywhere. You're telling me that doesn't show that she's an anti-Semite?"

"Yuri, she's being followed by Jews. Everywhere."

“She doesn’t know that.”

“The letter says she knows it.”

“I’m telling you, she’s guessing.”

“And I’m telling you, if I pass along something like that to the home office, it’ll be my ass on a plate.”

“After all the trouble I went through to get it, this is my gratitude.”

“How did you get it? Searching through her garbage cans?”

I’m not going to dignify that with an answer. We do quality work here, Barry, quality work. I had that letter almost before her lawyer opened it.”

Barry is glad when Yuri hangs up. He was an insufferable ass. But that still leaves him with a dilemma. If he includes any reference to the letter in his report, Dick Simon might ask him to see a copy and then he’s done for. But if he doesn’t include it, it’ll look like he’s been sitting on his hands all this time, and an alliance with the ADL had been a major coup; all that manpower with no additional expenditure. And that’s what he needs to crack this thing wide open—more manpower. The woman was getting help from somewhere, that was evident. And with a code 3 surveillance he could find out exactly where. Yes, that’s how he would put it. It was impossible for her to know about the ADL surveillance without some sort of outside intelligence, and if they want to proceed with this thing, then they need more intelligence as well. You fight fire with fire, not with a teaspoon of water. And he would send along a copy of the letter; framed in this light, it only supported his contentions all along. But it wouldn’t be a report that even hinted at “I told you so.” No, it would be resolute; just give me what I need and I’ll deliver the goods.

The words Code 3...Code 3... have been reverberating through Dick Simon’s head all day and he wants it to stop. He knows that Barry Levine’s report was full of enough shit to bury

the Washington Monument. But he also knows if he stops the surveillance now it would be just as good as admitting failure—and he never failed. At anything. Anywhere. At any time. And if he was ever to fail, unthinkable as it was, it would be over something important, and this woman was not important. She sank so far below the radar screen it was a joke. Invisible, that's what she is in the scheme of things, and that's what a good surveillance should be. And if the target spots the surveillance, then it means one of two things: the team was incompetent or the target had outside intelligence. And in a case like this she was getting her information from somewhere. Not that Barry Levine and his cohorts weren't incompetent, it's just that she wasn't that smart.

He turns to his computer, opens the second vault door with password for 2:15 PM, and pulls up her Watch List file. He stares at the face smiling back at him. Who are you Gloria Naylor? He thinks. Nobody. Living in a nowhere town on a nowhere island. And yet you've taken up half my day. And you're about to dip heavily into my budget because I'm putting a Code 3 on your file. You're going to be watched my dear, like you've never been watched before.

Barry Levine's Code 3 on the Naylor woman makes him feel like a kid in a candy store with a blank check. Three or four times a day he has to tell himself to calm down and do it right. First, there has to be a proposal filed, outlining the number of teams needed as well as electronic support. Since she's on a 24/7, he calculates that he needs three teams for a 7AM to 3PM; three teams for a 3PM to 11PM; and one for a 11PM to 7AM since she never leaves her house at night. And then there was all that manpower he could still draw from the ADL, especially now that the operatives could be paid. And he needs a field supervisor who could make at-the-moment decisions that he couldn't sitting up in Columbia. He'd

pull in a good man, David Shane, for the job. David had been with the Mossad for eighteen years before he retired and left Israel to live in the United States. Some say that he's never really retired and was a Mossad operative in Arlington, Virginia. Barry didn't give a crap if he was or wasn't; he was the best man for the job. And what money couldn't buy, an appeal to the prestige of working for the NSA would. Now that he could go into her house, he'd decide how many bugs to place; see how many phone lines there were to tap. Did she have a fax machine? A computer? If so, he had a couple of young hackers he could put on 24/7 to take care of that. Oh, yes, and a homing device for the truck. In the house or out the house or around the house, she was going to be his.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

It was a glorious April. The weather was already reaching into the low 70's and my azalea bushes were in full bloom. My garden was also prospering, and I finally listened to my neighbors' advice and used pepper spray to keep Eunice's cats at bay. Because of an insulation I had used called Wall-O-Water my tomatoes were coming in ahead of season. I only wished that my interior life was as pleasant as the weather. The drive-bys had slacked off, but the surveillance was continuing. When people are watching you it takes away a bit of you life every time you're followed into a supermarket, a hardware store, or a movie. There's nothing that you're hiding or keeping a secret, so there's nothing for them to find out except what you're doing with your day—with your life. And there was the continual feeling that my life was no longer mine; it belonged to strangers in dark glasses. It was invasion in its crudest form and it robbed me of my sense of peace. It also robbed me of my privacy for reasons that were still hidden to me. And since I had always been a quiet and private person, it was especial-

ly hard. I didn't take it lying down; I fought back in the only way I knew how, by talking to friends about my situation, by going to that lawyer in Charleston to see if there was some legal redress for the problem. And above all, by trying to keep my life going as it had before.

I still felt secure in my home and found myself spending more time there than I had before. In the day I had my garden and my books; at night I was on the internet talking to friends. And then I realized that they had even broken into that bit of my life. I was on my laptop making notations for my journal when a "spoof box" popped up on my screen. The window read: "Paging Idle." I couldn't get it to disappear and when I clicked on the button for "Answer," nothing happened. I had to shut down my computer to get rid of it. I booted up again, went back into my WordPerfect program, and after a short while there was another spoof box that was labeled, "Trouble." And the text in this window read, "Big Trouble. We're Gonna Die." I tried to use the "print screen" key on my laptop to have proof of this window, but it didn't work. And the only way to get rid of this window was to turn off the laptop and reboot the system. I am not a computer whiz; I knew the rudiments of how to use the system from owning computers over the years. But you didn't need to be an expert to understand that someone had hacked into my system. This fact distressed me more than the message, which I put down to a childish prank. But it also made me have second thoughts about whether or not the government was part of my surveillance. Wouldn't they be more professional than this? And how were they doing it anyway? My laptop wasn't part of a network of computers that someone could tap into. But someone, for some reason, was monitoring what I did on my laptop. Another invasion into my life. And if they were able to do this—and they were—what about my phone line? My fax machine? Were there even cameras in my home? A lot of questions for which I had no answers. Possible scenarios kept playing around in my head. I

turned off my laptop and went to bed, but I didn't go to sleep. I decided I was going to call the Sheriff's office in the morning and report this. I wasn't naïve enough to believe that they could offer a solution; but I wanted a record of what was happening. Perhaps, this wasn't the government at all; perhaps, it was just civilians with the power to disrupt my life. And then heaven only knew how it might escalate.



David Shane can't believe the mess he inherited from Barry Levine. There were people from the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Anti-Defamation League, and the National Security Agency all involved with following this woman. The DEA, the ADL, the NSA—a whole alphabet soup of operatives, all falling all over each other. And now he was expected to untangle this mess and bring some sort of order to the operation. No wonder she blew the surveillance; it was full of amateurs. His first order of business was to get the Drug Enforcement Agency to back off; and that wasn't so hard because they were deciding to wrap up their investigation anyway. It had come to a dead end. Now it was just a matter of what kind of alliance could be made from the operatives of the ADL and NSA. He doesn't want to disregard the ADL totally because their assistance helped to starch the manpower needed for a 24/7 on this woman. And a lot of what was going on with her was just raw intelligence: where she went, how long she stayed, who she talked to. This sort of thing required no expertise, just rotating teams of operatives. And with the phone tap it became even easier. When she made any appointments over the phone, they could follow her there as well as be there waiting. You didn't need to be a rocket scientist: but you did need organization, and all organizations needed a head. And the problem with the Naylor surveillance so far has been just that—no one at the helm. And everybody wanted a piece

of the action. Everybody wanted to play I-Spy. Working for the Mossad for eighteen years, Shane knew spy work—real spy work—was at it's best when it was subtle. What he had here is overkill. He would need every hour of his experience as a Psych Op officer to keep this operation alive and effective. He would need some of the operatives to back off—gently, while still being enthusiastic about the help they were offering.

Looking around at the group gathered in Eunice Simon's living room, he realizes it isn't going to be easy. The room is packed with operatives from the ADL and NSA, and each is arguing for their piece of the action. Each blames the other for the botched surveillance. They have managed to be on two different sides of the room, and Eunice is running between them offering coffee and doughnuts. A mass of people and about a thousand cats.

David hates cats and he keeps shifting his position on the sofa each time one of them rubs against his leg. He's a big man with a deep, booming voice that he uses now to get their attention. He tries to tell them that it doesn't matter what's happened in the past with the operation. This is a new day and a new administration. Things will be a lot more efficient now. First of all, they now have the manpower for a blanket surveillance. There is no place she can go or plan to go without their knowledge. There is no one she can talk to, fax, or e-mail without them knowing about it. They can follow her on trains, on planes, and definitely in that red truck. She is a woman alone, for God's sake. She has no organization behind her, has few friends and no help. If she tries to get help, they'll know about it in plenty of time to divert it, or at least to plan their next strategy. This whole operation is a walk in the park as long as they don't lose their heads.

"But someone must be helping," Rabbi Geller says. "Or how would she know that Jews are involved?"

"She doesn't know anything," Eunice snaps. "She's an anti-

Semite. I've been saying that from the beginning."

"I have a question," Hillary raises her hand as if she's at school.

"What is it?" David asks.

"If she knows about the surveillance, what good does it do to keep on with it?"

"We keep on with it until we're told not to," David says. "And even if she does know, what can she do about it? Her knowing might even be turned into an asset for us."

He looks at the puzzled faces in the room.

Just think about it," he continues. "Every time you leave your home you notice that a man in a gray coat is following you. Each time it's a different man, but the same gray coat and he tugs at his lapel. After a while there's no need for us to send the man in the gray coat because the target will see gray coats wherever she goes. And so who can she tell without seeming like a lunatic? No one. She's trapped in the world that she's entered—our world. And we can do anything with her that we want."

"So you're saying that we should send men in gray coats?" Rabbi Geller asks.

"No," David replies. "We send cars."



At first I thought the drive-bys had resumed. I would be sitting upstairs in my study off the bedroom and a maroon and yellow truck would speed past my window facing McTeer Drive. I thought it strange that it would be moving so fast on that bumpy, unpaved road. Perhaps it was to keep me from getting the license plate. Each morning it would appear and race on down the road. Ours was the quietest part of the island, and this truck didn't fit into the normal traffic pattern. It wasn't that disturbing and it never made a

repeat trip during the day. I began to notice other traffic patterns that seemed strange. Whenever I left home in my truck and headed down the Avenue of Oaks, a car would pull out of a side road in front of me, and shortly another one would pull out and drive in back of me. The front car was always below the speed limit so it slowed down my truck while the oncoming traffic seemed to be whipping by, well above the speed limit. The oncoming cars caused a little “zing” in my ears while the car in front of me kept hitting its brakes. It was a pattern that kept repeating itself: zing, zing, brake lights, brake lights, almost as if they were trying to hypnotize me. I would pass the slow car in front of me whenever I could, which would eliminate the blinking lights, but the zinging of oncoming traffic grew from a minor disturbance into a ringing pain in my ears. It made the thought of getting into my truck and heading for town an ordeal, and I used to love driving that truck. What kind of people would do such a thing? What were they hoping to accomplish?

If the goal was to keep me closer to the house, it worked. I only drove when I absolutely had to, and I spent much more time with my books and laptop. One evening, on a whim, I decided to look into my system files. There was a function on my computer that allowed me to list all of my DOS files on one screen. When I pulled up this screen, I saw that besides my C files, there was a mysterious B file listing. The files on this B drive were identical to those on the C drive with the exception of a file labeled “American. Vtd.” When I opened it, the file was encrypted. I copied it because it was proof that someone was hacking into my computer without my being on a network. Of all the things that had bothered me since the beginning of 1996, this was the worst. Those computer files held my work and above all, my thoughts, and someone was helping themselves to it.



Barry Levine knows he's going to have to call Dick Simon, but his hands tremble each time he reaches for the phone. The Naylor woman had accessed one of the hacker's files and copied it onto a separate disk. It wasn't anything important, just a joke between hackers, but it could have been important. It might have been classified information, it might have been top-secret information, it might have been anything except what it was—and that's how Simon would see it. This is a major glitch, the kind of mistake that costs someone his head. Since he was directing this operation, *his* head was the closest to the chopping block. He's been trying all morning to think of some way to avoid the inevitable. It would be useless to put all the blame on the hackers since he'd chosen them. He could bury it deep into the weekly report and hope that Simon didn't read it, but that's ludicrous because the man reads everything. No, best to make the call and then pack his bags.

Dick Simon is in a surprisingly good mood this morning. The Senate Committee on Intelligence had approved the new budget and he held a memo from his director, praising him for his good job at the hearing a few months ago. These are the kind of days he lives for, days of accomplishment. The memo from his boss is a lifeline. It shows that his work is appreciated—that he is appreciated, because he and his work are inseparable in his mind. The bottom seems far away when things are turning his way like this. He's wondering how long this mood will last. A whole day would be a gift.

But then he takes the call from Barry Levine. As Levine chatters nervously, Simon can feel the bottom open up again, wide and black and permanent. He doesn't know what is bothering him the most: the fact that Naylor found the file, the fact that Levine is

an idiot, or the fact that his good mood has had a lifespan of only twenty god-damn minutes.

His voice is steely and cold. "Am I going to have to take over this operation personally?"

"No, Mr. Simon, that's not necessary."

"Tell me why."

"Why, sir?"

"Yes, tell me why that's not necessary?"

"Because I..."

"Because you've done nothing but sit down there with your thumb up your ass since the beginning of this whole affair."

"If I may speak, sir, that's a bit unfair. I've..."

"You've turned a simple surveillance into a fiasco. A civilian now has a file that belongs to the National Security Agency. A civilian with no training in computer technology was able to access your files and steal information that belongs to this agency. And you allowed this to happen."

"Mr. Simon, there was really nothing on that file but..."

"That file contained top secret material. That file could help to bring this agency down. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"Mr. Simon, there was nothing on that..."

"Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"Yes, I understand."

"Good. So tell me again why I shouldn't take over this operation personally. Tell me why I should do anything but wrap you in brown paper and send you to Siberia?"

There is silence on the line.

"I'm waiting," Dick Simon says.

"I'd like another chance, sir."

"To do what? Screw up again?"

"To do my job."

"I'll get back to you."

Dick Simon sits at his desk and thinks. He brings his tented fingers up to his chin and sighs. The matter isn't whether to punish Barry Levine for his incompetence, but how severely. Simon must also decide if he wants to take over coordinating the Naylor surveillance, but did he really want to spend one good second of his time doing it? The fact that she had accessed and stolen their file meant that she was getting her help from somewhere, and by this time, they should have found out who or where. There was nowhere she could move without them knowing the specifics. Surely she was sitting there in St. Helena laughing at them. This nobody. This... A deep flush from his collar to his hairline. She wouldn't be laughing for long. He decides he will call in The Boys.

The Boys are young recruits who have graduated from the high school on the NSA campus. They have been groomed in undercover work, and are attending various colleges throughout the nation. They are used as informants in their schools now, but the semester is ending. Simon thinks they might enjoy a little romp for the summer season. Once he had them in place, he would take over Levine's job of coordinating the surveillance. He'd leave David Shane as the field captain. Shane was a good man. Now that he wouldn't have Levine as a stone around his neck, he would probably do a better job. As for Levine, he could just hang in the wind for a while. Let him agonize over his eventual fate—that would be part of his punishment.

The Boys come down in full force. There are only four of them—Paulo, Hallam, Ricky, and Chee, but they seem like much more as they move randomly around Eunice's living room. At first sight they look like all other teenage boys with knee-length pants, oversized tee shirts, and baseball caps. But their skin is pale from a lack of sun because these are the geeks from their various schools. All are considered computer nerds, as they spend every minute of their free time with their laptops or video games. It's exactly what

they're doing now as they wait for David Shane to gain control of the meeting.

The group is in an uproar about the copied file. Shane is trying to convince them that it was nothing important that they need worry about. Just a childish prank. The file didn't mention them and couldn't, in any way, tie them personally to the operation.

Paulo slides over to sit beside Hallam on the floor.

"Tweet," Paulo says.

"Tweet, tweet," Hallam answers back.

"I told you to stop that in here," Eunice snaps. "It's silly."

"Tweet, tweet," Hallam raises his head and answers her.

"Leave those boys alone," David Shane says. "They're not the problem. Our lack of guts is the problem."

"And what do you mean by that?" Rabbi Geller asks.

"I mean," Shane says, "that we're talking about only one woman here. One single woman. And everything she does gets us quaking in our boots. She stumbled onto that file, that's all. And we can see that she never deciphers it. So what's the big deal?"

"This is turning into a bad dream," Rabbi Geller says. "And I want it over and done with."

"Isn't there some way we can just make her leave the island?" Eunice asks. "Let her go back to New York so she becomes someone else's problem?"

"Running her out of town is not in our job description," David Shane says, "Our job is to watch her. But I guess while we're watching her, it won't be so bad if we nudge her a little."

"And how do we do that?" Rabbi Geller asks.

The Boys never speak while in the meeting. They communicate with each other in bird talk or on their PDA monitors. Ricky writes the word "noise" on his PDA and shows it to Chee. Chee nods and Ricky takes the PDA to Paulo and Hallam.

“Tweet,” Paulo says.

“Tweet, tweet,” Ricky answers.

Ricky takes the PDA to David Shane with the word “noise” underlined.

“Tweet,” Ricky says.

“Will you make them stop doing that,” Eunice says. “It’s driving me crazy.”

David Shane ignores her. Regardless of how eccentric they are, these boys had come down with the blessing of the NSA on their heads. Dick Simon was no fool. He wouldn’t have sent them if they weren’t the best at their job.

“The Boys think we should initiate a noise campaign,” David Shane says. “And it’s not a bad idea. A person lives on this end of the island if they want peace and quiet. We’ve taken away her peace by using cars in the drive-bys. Now we take away her quiet. If anything would make her leave the island, that would.”

“So we start honking horns and banging tin plates,” Eunice says. “That’s going to go over really big with my other neighbors.”

“What we do,” David Shane says, “is enhance her environment. Think about the cars. She’s the only one who’s affected by the speeding cars because we tempered her first with the pickup truck speeding past her window. So we get closer by renting that old plantation house next to her and sensitizing her to other sounds: lawn mowers, buzz saws, hammering from construction, that sort of thing. It’s worth a try. And in the meanwhile we keep up the surveillance, double it if need be. She knows about the surveillance—good. Put yourself in her place. There’s no peace when you leave home, and no quiet when you’re at home. Wouldn’t you leave?”

Within two weeks they determine the owner of the old plantation house, rent it under the cover of two bachelors from Chicago, and furnish it with tables and beds. It becomes the command center for the operation. Shane is satisfied with the setup. The

second-floor bedroom window looks directly across to the Naylor property. It would be child's play to keep her under surveillance while she was on her porch or in her garden. But what worries him the most is that with The Boys included in the operation, it is actually child's play. None of this is serious business for them. He doesn't press down on them too hard because they came directly from Dick Simon and therefore believe they should answer only to him. It's nothing that they've said or done directly, but there is an unspoken consensus that these are Simon's boys and that they should be given pretty much a free hand.

The Boys are bored. There is little for them to do on this operation but clock the comings and goings of the Naylor woman. They have whole fact sheets for weeks of this type of observation. The time she left the house and the time she came back. The time she spent in her garden. The time she was on the porch reading. The time she went to bed and the time she got up. Hallam, who is responsible for hacking into her computer, has the most action. She is always e-mailing her friends in New York, talking on and on about the surveillance. They wish she would just shut the hell up about that and go on to something important.

They are having their breakfast of Captain Crunch and orange juice when Ricky gets an idea.

"Tweet," Ricky says.

"Tweet, tweet," Paulo answers back.

"Let's play a game tonight," Ricky says. "Let's play 'poison the target.'"

"What are the rules?" Hallam asks.

"The rules are simple," Ricky says. "We go under the house and pretend to poison the water line. The first man in and out wins."

"Sounds good to me," Chee says. "Tweet, tweet."

“Tweet,” the others answer back.

They dress in dark clothes and at 3AM they creep out of the plantation house and quietly make their way towards the Naylor property. They use only bird talk as they circle the house, looking for the crawl space. Each boy carries a wrench, a night flashlight, and a bag of mud. Paulo finds the crawl space first and quickly slithers under the house. The others follow suit. It’s not as easy to find the water line, but when they do, they tap on it with their wrenches and smear it with mud. Tweet, tweet. The job is done. There is an edge of excitement in the fact that they might be caught as they each leave the crawl space and hurry back to the plantation house.

“You see,” Ricky says. “Now she’s dead.”

“Ding dong, the witch is dead,” Paulo sings. “No more boring days of watching her boring life. She’s dead, dead, dead.”

“Tweet, tweet,” Hallam sings.

“Tweet, tweet, tweet,” the others join in.



I had stopped sleeping soundly during the night. I would wake up in fits and starts. It wasn’t because of the increasing heat; I liked warm nights and didn’t even own an air-conditioner. It was just general unrest. The surveillance was never off my mind. As I lay in the darkness wide awake, I heard them for the first time. The birds. The sounds carried well in the still of the night. Tweet. Tweet. Tweet. There were no birds in that part of the island that sang at night. So I knew it had to be them, the people who were watching me. They had come onto my property and were circling the house. I got out of bed and went to the window, but I saw nothing in the pitch black. I went downstairs and cut on the lights on the screened porch, wishing that I had a dog. That would have stopped this intrusion. I left the porch lights on and went back upstairs to bed. I did-

n't hear the birds any more as I lay awake until the first light of dawn.

I was groggy the next morning as I sat on the sun porch, having my coffee and looking out over the water. I could see the old plantation house very well. There were two cars parked in the yard.

Obviously, people had moved in. When they came, I don't know. They had apparently made the move in the middle of the night. I wondered if I should be neighborly and go over and introduce myself. But there was something about this setup that didn't seem right. Something foreboding. I made a mental note to myself to ask Betty if she knew who the new people were since she made it her business to know everyone on that part of the island.

Whoever the new people were, they were certainly noisy. I was out in my garden staking the tomatoes, when a whole half-day of hammering began. It sounded like they were building a new wing on the house. I went up to my study and tried to read, but that meant I had to endure the drive-bys. I had told myself that I was going to follow the advice of friends and ignore the drive-bys by doing my reading on the front porch of the house. But it seemed that whenever I was near that porch there was some new onslaught of noise to deal with. It seemed like they mowed that property every other day. When it wasn't the sound of mowing, there was some sort of chainsaw going. Going out for a peaceful drive was out of the question, because I had to deal with the cars zinging by in my ears and the blinking brake lights in front of me. I only went out when I absolutely had to. I was surrounded. Whenever I turned they were there to manipulate my environment. Slowly, each day, they were closing in.

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The Boys watch the Naylor woman as she exits her back door to go and weed her garden. It is no fun playing “poison the target” when she gets up the next day alive to taunt them. She isn’t keeping up her end of the game if she doesn’t die.

“Tweet,” Hallam says.

“What?” Paulo answers.

“I know a game,” Hallam says. “Let’s play ‘poison the garden’”

“How does it go?” Chee asks.

“Well,” Hallam says, “we go out at night and each of us takes a section of the garden to kill. And whatever section dies first, that man is the winner.”

“Sounds good,” Ricky says. “And we don’t tell each other what type of poison we’re going to use. Let’s make it a real competition.”

“And we leave nothing,” Paulo says. “Nothing that lets her know that someone has been in the garden. Not a stick moved, not a footprint anywhere.”

It’s 3AM and they creep out into the night. Dressed in dark clothes and each carrying a paper bag, they circle the house. Paulo throws a rock onto the roof nearest her bedroom window, but nothing stirs.

“Tweet, tweet,” Hallam says and they move towards the garden.

The Boys are so excited they can hardly contain themselves. A real mission at last. Paulo takes the section where the young tomato plants are flourishing. He digs a circle around one plant with his hands and opens his paper bag, which contains chemical fertilizer. He takes huge handfuls and fills in the hole. Then he puts the dirt back over the circle he has made. He can see the shadows of the other boys moving slowly throughout the garden, and he tweets to tell them that it’s time to go.

Back in the house, they are in high spirits. The game has come off very well. They all slap each other's hands in a high-five.

"Did you see what Ricky did?" Chee asks.

"It's so damn dark out there, you can hardly see your hand in front of your face," Hallam says.

"Well, Rick pissed on the zucchini," Chee says.

And they all have a good laugh.

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Betty invited me over for a drink and I asked her if she knew anything about the new people who had moved into the plantation house. She had very little to say except that they were supposed to be from Chicago and they were two men.

"I went over," she said, "But they weren't very friendly. As a matter of fact, they came right out and told me that they had come down for peace and quiet and wanted to be left alone. They're probably gay, she continued, but somehow they didn't strike me as the type."

"There is no type for being gay," I told her.

She conceded that she knew that, but if she were a betting woman, she would lay five on the fact that they were ex-military. Just something about them. They certainly keep up a lot of noise, I told her. She said she hadn't really noticed, but then again the sounds would travel differently because of where her house sat. And I should remember that I was one of the few people on that part of the island who worked at home so I'd probably hear more than anyone else. Then she asked me about my garden and I invited her over to see. I was proud of the effort that had gone into that little patch of land.

Walking her through it, I noticed that one of my tomato plants had drooped and the leaves were starting to curl up. I checked for bugs, but there were none on it. Poor thing looks like

it's gone sick, she said. That'll happen sometimes. They just get a disease and wither up. I'd get rid of it if I were you; it might help to save the others. I promised myself to do that the next day. But when I went out to check, the plant had gone totally black as if someone had scorched it with fire. I also saw that my brussels sprouts were beginning to wither. I dug up the tomato plant and all the brussels sprouts. It was like losing a part of myself. I had worked so hard on that garden.



"Poison the garden" is a big success for The Boys. But it's one they dare not repeat. Let her think that it happened naturally, so they have a secret that she won't uncover. It's important that David Shane doesn't know as well. And if she was all over the phone or e-mailing her friends, talking about someone killing the garden, he'd find out. It would be in the reports. No, they'd had their fun, and now it was back to the boring, the mind-numbing, details of her nothing-of-a-life. Her having discovered that file was still a sore point for them. It had happened before their watch, but it was a matter of honor for them to punish her in some way for doing it.

"I have a great game we can play," Paulo says. "A magnificent one."

"Tweet," Ricky says.

"But you haven't even heard it yet," Paulo answers back.

"Tweet, tweet," Ricky says.

"Well, fuck you too," Paulo answers.

"Come on guys. Let's not fight," Chee says. What's your idea, Paulo?"

"The witch stole our file, right? So we play 'Steal her laptop.'"

"She carries that laptop with her everywhere she goes," Hallam says.

“Do we hire someone to mug her?” Chee asks.

“No,” Paulo says. “It’s even better than that. We use one of her friends to help us get it. She won’t even see it coming.”

When they first hacked into the Naylor woman’s computer, they copied her electronic rolodex file. They were privy to all of her friends and contacts. Amongst the five hundred or so names, they had pulled up six who were known to the Agency as informants or operatives. Of these, the only one she had called while on the island was C.J. Hudson. She had gone into her usual dumb-ass tirade about the surveillance and how unhappy she was. They would bring him down to the island to help them out.

“We’ll need David on this one,” Hallam says.

“Leave David to me,” Paulo says. “We’ll get what we want.”

C.J. Hudson is having a good semester. For him, every semester becomes a good one as it’s ending. He has taught four classes this year, so there’s a pile of history exams to mark. It amazes him how much time will have to go into correcting simple things like grammar and syntax, for Princeton students no less. He’s sorting the blue exam books into piles, trying to decide which stack to take home first. A small-statured black man, his dark fingers work swiftly as the piles continue to grow. He’s been teaching history at Princeton for almost twenty years and in only two of those did the university deem it fit to give him a graduate assistant. Each year he fought for it though, but to no avail. C.J. likes to think of himself as a fighter, a crusader for his rights and the rights of the black academic community. He uses his scholarship as his sword, penning numerous books and papers about black self-determination. He is known among his colleagues as an up-front type of guy, a firebrand that doesn’t mind bucking the authorities. There are two things, however, that his colleagues don’t know about him: he’s

gay, and he's an informant for the National Security Agency.

He was first recruited for the Agency while in college during the 1960's. He brought them information about the activities of several black student organizations, which they would share with the FBI. He chaired some of these groups and in others was considered a valuable asset. In all of them, he would have been the last person thought of as an informant. He did it for the money. He told himself if he didn't, someone else would. After he graduated and started teaching at various universities, he wanted to leave that part of his past behind, but he found out it wasn't so easy. Once an informant, you stay an informant. The Agency had called on him from time to time while he was at Princeton. He helped them to keep an eye on black student activities and organizations. Now they were calling again. Two of them rang his bell just after dinner to send him on one of his toughest assignments to date; he had to betray a friend.

"Can't you get someone else to go," he asked.

"No," the two agents told him. "It has to be you, and it has to be now."

"I have papers to grade," he said.

"Grade them in St. Helena," they told him. "We want you on that plane by the end of the week. I don't think we have to tell you how much you owe us."

No, they didn't have to tell him, he knew. A few years back, when he was arrested on a moral's charge involving a teenaged male prostitute, it took one call and he was out of jail with all of the paperwork mysteriously disappearing. That's what these people could do—make you disappear. Everything you've worked for, everything you've built over the years—gone in the blink of an eye. C.J. was not a courageous man. If he has to balance his life against a friendship, his life wins.

When C.J. gets off the plane in Savannah, Gloria is there to meet him, and she's so happy to see him that it breaks his heart. "You were worried about me, weren't you?" she asks.

"I was worried," he says, "but I also wanted a little vacation as well. I can't wait to see this house of yours."

The drive from Savannah to St. Helena is a pleasant one. She chatters on about the places she's going to show him and the restaurants they can visit. But the best restaurant of all is at her house.

"You'll be eating straight from the garden," she told him, "and we can put out crab cages right from my property."

C.J. genuinely likes Gloria Naylor. She has proven to be a true friend over the ten years he's known her. When his mother was sick a few years back and was in danger of losing her house, Gloria loaned him five thousand dollars to help satisfy the mortgage. He'd paid her back, every penny, but she was the only one of his friends to step forward and offer to help without being asked. And she'd never mentioned it, never brought it up. Some people want to remind you of your debts to them, but not Gloria. I was glad I had it to help, was all she ever said on the matter. He asks himself for the hundredth time how he can bring himself to do what they wanted—turn over her computer and he answers himself for the hundredth time that he is really bringing no harm to anyone. They just want to look at it, that's all. She can't win this war she's engaged in; she has no idea of the forces and resources that are weighed against her. If you can't win, why fight? He knows the answer for himself, and he knows the answer for her. She would fight just for the principle of it all.

C.J. dutifully follows Gloria around her garden as she proudly shows him its progress. It had some sort of disease at first, she said, but it bounced back. Personally, he'd be bored with this lifestyle—living on an island, growing tomatoes and spinach. Her

face lights up as she shows him where the cantaloupes and water-melons will come in. He has to admit that the vegetables from her garden are certainly delicious. She puts out quite a spread for him—barbecued chicken, mashed potatoes, sugar snap peas. He has brought two bottles of wine and they share one while sitting on her screened porch after dinner.

“Tomorrow I’ll show you the rest of the island,” she says. “And you’ll love Pen Center; it was a school for the first freed slaves after the Civil War. And they say it’s where Martin Luther King planned the March on Washington back in the 60’s.”

“It sounds great to me, but I also have to spend time grading exam books I brought down.”

That night, after he’s sure that Gloria is sleeping, he slips downstairs to make a call to the number that he has been given. He turns on the television so that the voice will be disguised in case she happens to wake up. He has little to say though. His job is to listen. There’s a street festival on the Savannah waterfront, he’s told. He’s to be there by noon the next day for further instructions. C.J. hangs up the phone and slips quietly upstairs to his room.

At breakfast the next morning he tells Gloria that he’d love to see the Savannah waterfront. Was it possible they could go? She agrees readily. Savannah is one of her favorite cities and she loves the renovations they’ve done at the waterfront.

“I want you to know something,” she says. “We’re going to be followed.”

C.J.’s heart starts racing and he looks at her startled.

“They follow me wherever I go,” she continues. “But for today I’m not going to worry about it. I’m just going to try and have some fun with a friend.”

“That’s the best thing,” he tells her.

The Savannah waterfront is crowded with tourists and locals. An array of restaurants, gift shops, and novelty stores are

packed into a half-mile stretch of shoreline. It is especially crowded today because of the street fair. Local artists, representing practically every town in the low country, are displaying their creations. Gloria is an avid collector of T-shirts, so they stop in a large store that sells them. As they look around the store, C.J. breaks off from Gloria.

A woman pushing a baby carriage whispers in his ear as she passes, "Go outside." And then she moves to another part of the store. C.J. finds Gloria and tells her that he's going to go outside for a minute. Would she be long? Not much longer, she tells him.

C.J. goes outside and Paulo is there waiting. "Does she have the computer?" he asks.

"I'm not sure," C.J. replies. "She has a large red bag besides her pocketbook. Maybe, it's in there."

"Find out," Paulo tells him. "And remember, we're watching. Now, buy something before you go back in." Paulo melts into the crowd. C.J. buys a packet of note cards from the nearest vendor and returns to the store.

"I'm ready," Gloria tells him.

"Good," he says. "Let's go get a drink."

Gloria takes him to one of her favorite places, a lounge on the second floor of the Holiday Inn. It's not terribly crowded and it overlooks the water. They take a table by the window and order two wine spritzers, sitting for a moment in silence and enjoying a view of the water as the boats go by. "So what do you think I should do?" she asks.

"About?"

"The surveillance, C.J. And they hacked into my computer and have all my files."

C.J. heaves a deep sigh. "Maybe it'll go away, Gloria. In time. For now, just for today, let's try to forget about it."

After the waiter brings them the check and they're ready to go, C.J. picks up Gloria's large red bag. "Let me take this for you."

He starts for the elevator before she can protest. Downstairs he tells her that he has to use the bathroom. With her red bag in tow, he heads for the other end of the lobby. Hallam follows him into the bathroom. He takes the red bag, unzips it, and finds the laptop wrapped in aluminum foil and folded into a towel.

"You've done good work, C.J. Now get this back to her."

"Is this the end of this shit?" C.J. asks.

"We'll let you know. Call us tonight at the regular time."

The Boys are elated. They've won the latest game. And the dumb witch didn't even have a clue. But there was more fun they could wring out of this operation. They had C.J. for another two days, so why not make use of him? Any low-life could win "steal the computer" by simply knocking her down and running off with the bag. They could go one step further: steal and reprogram the computer without her knowing it. For that, the bag would have to be out of her hands for a few hours, and she must never know. C.J. would have to help them steal the computer while she was asleep.

"But what if she wakes up?" C.J. asks them on the phone later that night.

"That's not our problem. That's your problem," Paulo tells him.

C.J. knows that the only way to do what they want is to drug her. He remembers a song from his youth "Limbo Rock," with its recurring line, "How low can you go?" That's what he asks himself now, sitting on the porch with Gloria. It heartens him to see how his visit has started to relax her. She is much less tense than when he first came two days ago. If she only knew, he thinks, what a snake I am.

“Let me get us a drink,” he says. “There’s still another bottle of wine.” He gets up and leaves the porch for the kitchen.

The sleeping pills are in his pocket. For the last ten years he’s never been without them. He takes out two and dissolves them in her glass of wine, telling himself that such a low concentration won’t be too harmful. She’ll just go into a deep sleep, he thinks. A very deep sleep. And then this whole mess will be over. They’ll be happy and I’ll go back to Princeton. After only half a glass he sees that Gloria is so groggy that she can hardly hold her head up.

“I guess I’d better go to bed,” she says. “Suddenly, I’m not feeling too good.”

“Just finish up your wine,” he tells her, “and then we’ll both turn in.”

She drinks the last bit of her wine, gets up from her chair, and stumbles upstairs to bed. C.J. takes the two wine glasses and rinses them in the sink. He waits down on the porch for another hour until he’s sure that she’s under, and slips upstairs. The red bag is at the foot of her bed, and she’s in a deep sleep. Quietly, he lifts the bag and leaves the room.

C.J. waits on the porch for further instructions as he was told to do. He paces up and down, looking at the red bag as though it is a bomb. His fears are groundless, but they threaten to overwhelm him anyway. What if the pills aren’t strong enough and she wakes up? What if they take the bag and don’t return it? What if, in some God-awful way, she finds all of this out? His pacing is interrupted by a shrill whistle. Paulo appears as if he melts out of the night. C.J. hands him the red bag.

“When will you be back?” C.J. asks.

“A couple of hours. Just wait here.”

C.J. goes upstairs to check on Gloria. She’s still in a deep sleep. He returns to the porch to wait.

They are tweeting. They are crowing. Ricky even stands on his head. The cause for all of the celebration is sitting on a table--the laptop. They have hours and hours to do anything with her laptop that they wish. They play the game of installing a virus. Tiring of that, they play fragmenting her hard drive. But with all of this, not once do they ever, ever, really touch it. That's not in the rules of the game. It amused them that she was so paranoid she had wrapped the laptop in aluminum foil and folded it into a towel. They didn't need to reprogram her computer in order to hack into it, but the dumb witch obviously thought they did. Before zipping back up the bag, they gently take the edge of the towel and fold it over. There. Invasion complete. As for C.J., just let him stew over there. They leave him waiting four hours instead of two, and when they finally return the laptop, he's still on the porch. He's dozed off, but a shrill whistle awakens him.

"You said two hours." C.J. grabs the bag from Paulo.

"Time flies when you're having fun," Paulo says. "Listen, you leave tomorrow, but we need to talk to you before you go."

"It might be too hard to call you in the daytime," C.J. says.

"No, don't call. We need you over at the plantation house."

"How am I going to manage that?" C.J. asks.

"A smart man like you should be able to figure something out. Just be there." And Paulo melts into the night.

C.J. packs his bags early, readying himself for his trip back to New Jersey. He feels like he's getting out of jail. He hears Gloria in the shower as he goes downstairs to pack up his exam books. He had worked on the side porch while he was visiting. Packing up his exams, he looks over at the plantation house. Now would be the time to do it if it ever was going to get done. He leaves the porch and races across the lawn. He knocks on a back door, which can't be seen from Gloria's house. Chee opens the door.

“Good morning,” Chee says. “Sleep well last night?”

“Let’s just get this over with. What do you want?” C.J. asks.

“Now, that’s not friendly,” Chee says. “Didn’t your mother ever teach you any manners?”

“You keep my goddamned mother out of your mouth. Now what did you want?”

Chee calls upstairs for Paulo who comes sliding down the banister.

“This is a great house, isn’t it?” Paulo says. “I’ve always wanted to do that since I saw it in the movies.”

“What do you want?” C.J. asks, gritting his teeth.

“We wanted to thank you for making our mission a success. Your government will be indebted to you for years. And we also wanted to know one thing—how could you stick a knife in a friend’s back and keep on smiling?”

The Boys laugh and C.J. feels tears starting at the back of his eyes.

“Target on the move,” Ricky calls from upstairs.

“Uh, oh, it looks like Gloria’s on the porch,” Paulo says.

“She must have taken a quick shower this morning.”

“How do you know she was in the shower?” C.J. asks.

“The same way we know that you didn’t say anything you had no business saying,” Paulo replies. “We’ve bugged the whole damn house. And we want you to think about this before you go and maybe your conscience starts bothering you a little. You’re to say nothing to no one about what went on here this weekend. Nothing. No one. Because maybe your phone is tapped and maybe it isn’t. And maybe your house is bugged and maybe it isn’t. You see, C.J, you’ll never know when we might be paying a visit on you. You can go now.”

“If I leave now, she’ll see me.”

“Okay, we’ll give you a little help.”

Paulo leads C.J. to the back door as he fits an earpiece into his ear.

“Okay,” Paulo says. “I’m wired. Where’s the target now?”

“Target still on the porch,” Hallam says into Paulo’s earpiece.

“I guess she’s wondering where you are,” Paulo says. “So listen up. When I tell you to run, you get down to that beach and bring up the crab cages that you put out yesterday.”

“Target’s left the porch,” Hallam says into Paulo’s earpiece.

“Okay,” Paulo tells C.J. “Now run.”

C.J. sprints from the back door.



I couldn’t find C.J. anywhere in the house, and it was time to leave if he wanted to catch his plane in Savannah. His exam books and backpack were on the side porch, but he was nowhere in sight. I doubled back from the kitchen out to the porch again, and then I saw him. He was running from the back of the plantation house and headed full speed for the beach. He was running so fast that he slipped on the slope leading to the water. I didn’t have to ask. I knew. If he was coming from that plantation house, he was working for them. Then all of his strange behavior during the weekend fell into place: his uneasiness, his disappearance in Savannah, his insistence on carrying my bag—all of it. I felt numb inside. He came back up to the house, holding a dripping wet crab cage. He was breathing hard from fear.

“Look, we got some crabs.”

“Why would you go crabbing in your best clothes?” I asked.

“I just wanted to see what we had,” he answered.

“Leave them outside,” I said. “It’s time to get to the airport.”

We drove to the airport, mainly in silence, as I thought a lot about friendship. Most of my friends, like myself, were unmarried and childless. Without a spouse or children in the equation, friends took a high priority in our lives. Longevity was important and loyalty was utmost. I was never the type of person to have a whole cadre of friends like my sister did. I counted myself lucky to have two or three close ones. Everyone else I considered an acquaintance. C.J. was one I had come to consider a close friend, and that’s what made his betrayal devastating. Couldn’t he have simply said, not this time? Another time, maybe. Another person certainly. Surely, there were some people who would have stayed loyal when the CIA, FBI, or whoever in the hell they were, came calling. Surely, there were some who had the guts to say, I’ll help you out next time, but not this time. Didn’t he know what these people were doing to me? Hadn’t I told him, along with a precious few, how hard all of this was on me? Yes he knew and obviously he didn’t care. I let him off at the Savannah airport without fanfare. Drove directly back home. Put my head in my hands. And for the first time since this whole ordeal began, I cried.



After over two months of phone tapping, The Boys finally hit something of substance; the Naylor woman is going back to New York. They can hardly contain themselves with joy; this is going to be great. They have personnel and resources in the city that would make this operation in St. Helena look like the backwoods town that it was. And when they are off-duty, there are movies and clubs and concerts and above all, video game stores up

the kazoo. It never crosses their minds that Dick Simon might use a new crew for the New York operation. Hadn't he already told them that they were doing a bang-up job there in St. Helena? And hadn't he said that there was a memo to that effect going into their files? No, if this operation was moving to New York, they were moving with it. Now that they had her on the run, they could keep her running. After the C.J. Hudson affair, it was clear that the woman was a total paranoid. There she was, on the phone, talking all over her mouth that he had betrayed her when there was no way—no way—that she knew about his involvement. The whole venture had gone down smooth as a baby's behind, and no one could take it from them. Not this lying witch, no one.

David Shane sees no reason why the operation should continue in New York. He's composing a memo to send to Dick Simon to that effect. What is considered a threat in this little town pales in comparison to what's available in New York. There, Black Muslims practically rule certain neighborhoods and have a force of thousands. There were probably as many anti-Semites in New York as there were Jews. Surely the ADL had bigger fish to fry than this ineffectual woman who spends her time growing tomatoes and trying to read. "Trying to read" was the operative term since The Boys noise campaign had proven to be a success. Coupling that with the cars and drive-bys, she had practically become a prisoner in her own home. That might prove to be difficult to execute in a large city. There are always noises that city people simply didn't hear: honking horns, loud arguments, crying babies. Or if they hear it, they condition themselves to it. No, he'll tell Dick Simon that the St. Helena operation can call itself a success. Community participation was high and spirited; the target was moving on, and so should they.

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Sometimes Dick Simon can't sleep at night. Sometimes he fears his dreams. The one he calls "the slippery slope" is the worst. He's on a high mountain and instead of snow there is smoke. A whole mountain covered with smoke. He starts to slip, and slip, and slip, but there's no bottom. The bottom is always a few feet down, a few feet down, and a few feet down as he slides toward it. The bottom is always waiting. He wakes up in a cold sweat with his mouth feeling like it's full of cotton. When he goes into the bathroom for a drink of water, sometimes his hands are shaking so badly the water spills out. Tonight is such a night. He has just had the slippery slope dream, and he can still feel his heart pounding as he lies awake in bed. Usually, he can pinpoint the origin of the dream by something that has happened at work. But things were going smoothly there. He is the kind of man that makes little decisions with the same precision that he makes big ones. Preparing a report for the Senate Committee on Intelligence takes on the same import as hiring a new secretary from the typing pool. But tonight the dream has its origin not in the decisions he'd made yesterday, but in the one he hadn't—what to do about the Naylor surveillance?

Two memos had come across his desk, almost within hours of each other. One from David Shane, his field coordinator in St. Helena, and the other from The Boys. Each took the same basic facts, the success of the St. Helena operation, and spun them off into two opposing directions: Shane wanted to go, The Boys wanted to stay. What Dick Simon wants is for Gloria Naylor to just go burn in hell. He's feeling a growing hatred for this woman who has now even invaded his dreams. Hating her is easier than hating himself for letting her matter. She is nothing, he keeps telling himself, absolutely nothing. And yet here she is, on his mind, in his house. The Boys call her a witch, and they're right. But are they also right about moving the operation to New York City? Brooklyn, wasn't it? Trust her to be in one of the most exciting cities in the world and

to pick a nowhere place like Brooklyn to live. A nobody living nowhere. It was a repeat of St. Helena. What wouldn't be a repeat was the botched hacking job and a botched surveillance. Dick Simon knows that the "success" both memos spoke of were only by-products of the target peeling away the cover of the operation. She knew that her computer was accessed, and she knew that she was being followed. It was bothering the hell out of her, and, yet, there was nothing she could do about it since she could never prove it. So she was going to run back home to New York. Should they follow?

He gives up all pretense of sleep and gets up and sits on the side of his bed. When his head is full of cotton, like it is tonight, it sometimes helps if he calls Renee and asks for a visit. If she isn't with a client she usually shows up within the hour. Simon is one of her long and valued customers. He likes the pros: it's clean and neat, no emotional entanglements, no expectations, and no conversation if that's the way he wanted it. And tonight, that is exactly the way he wanted it. Just let her show up, do her job, and leave. He makes the call, and he's in luck. She'll be right there. He goes into the spare bedroom and takes the cover off the bed. He's never been with her in his own bed, a little quirk of his. He opens the bedroom closet to remove another one of his little quirks that she doesn't mind: his Nazi SS boots. He can feel himself already getting hard as he strokes the smooth black leather. The seller claimed that they had belonged to a captain in the SS, but Simon didn't believe him for one minute. It was probably some low-level soldier, but it still fit the bill. Except for a little tightness around the instep, they fit him well.

He strips off his pajamas and slips into the boots. When the doorbell rings he meets her as he always does—totally naked except for the boots. The first time he did this he searched her face closely for a reaction. But she was a pro, so there was none. That's

as kinky as he gets: no handcuffs, no whips, no ropes. Just a few licks to his boots and, then, a straight fuck. Renee considers him one of her easier clients.

Tonight it doesn't work. No matter how hard she tries, he can't keep an erection. Renee is apologetic and blames herself; why not let her give him a blowjob? No, he tells her, just get out. You'll call me again, won't you babe? I'll call you, he says. After she's left, he takes off the boots, puts them back into the closet, and gets back into his pajamas. But sleep is over for him this night. It's 4:30, too early to go to work. One of the guards might mention it to another who would talk to another, and then it might reach his staff that something had been wrong. And nothing was ever wrong in Dick Simon's office. No, as much as he hates it, he will have to sit and think things through about the Naylor woman.

He wonders how deeply one can hate? He definitely hates her for several good reasons: She'd humiliated him by blowing the surveillance and by accessing one of their files on her computer. She'd even come into his home, robbing him of sleep and of the few small pleasures he'd kept for himself. Those were all good reasons for hating her but how deeply did he hate her? It comes to him that he hates her the way you might hate a pesky mosquito that keeps buzzing around your ears. You keep waving it away, but you know it won't stop buzzing until it's sucked your blood. That's what this whole operation is to him—a pesky mosquito. And the only way to deal with something like that is to kill it. You go into the house and get some spray, or you wait quietly until you can see it and then you slap your hands together and destroy it. Once it's dead, your hatred is over. No one goes around still hating a dead mosquito. Once you crush it, all your reasons for hating it are gone.

Gloria Naylor, by peeling off the cover of the surveillance, had entered their world. No one had invited her in, but there she was. Now, after doing her dirt, she wanted to run away. Dick Simon

decides that he won't let her. She has no idea who she'd been playing with. And now she wants the game to be over. Well, the game is over when he decides it's over. There was so much more they could do that it would make her head swim. In New York, their resources were almost unlimited. He was going to give The Boys full reign on this one. They were right. If she's on the run, keep her on the run. When she sees there's nowhere left to go, they wouldn't have to crush her. She'd crumble on her own.

David Shane won't move with the operation to New York. After two months he's had his fill of what he privately thinks of as the pettiness of the whole thing. This woman is no threat to Jews or anyone else. What The Boys thought of as fun—taking bets on the time it takes her to urinate in the morning—he found demeaning to them all. New York wasn't going to bring them any more information than they already had. She lives privately and she is intelligent and observant. She had stumbled onto those files, nothing else. There was no secret network out there helping her. If they would open their minds they'd see it just that way. This operation had lost its point, if it ever really had one. When he was with the Mossad and dealing with the Hezbollah, he knew that the intelligence gathered could help to stop a suicide bombing or a missile attack. But what did the intelligence on the Naylor woman lead to? Nothing. Absolutely nothing except certain facts about her life. And it was a harmless life, so it leaves you with nothing to document except how long it takes her to weed her garden or to go to the supermarket, or what radio programs she listens to. There it was spread out before you, a woman living her life. Nothing more, nothing less.

Where do you go from there? Well, you disrupt that life. She's bothered by the cars driving by, so you increase them. She's bothered by the noise, so you intensify it. At least that's an objec-

tive. It was a success. She's leaving the island. To David Shane it's time to call it a day.

His memo to that effect had been overruled by Dick Simon. Shane was furious that The Boys had gone over his head and sent their own memo to Simon. Since when did children call the shots in an operation? And they were nothing but children, thinking of this whole thing as a game. Only a part of him admits that they are right. This has turned into a game since there is definitely no serious work afoot. The question for him is whether he wants to keep playing. He doesn't. He wants to go back to his own life in Virginia, to his home and his wife, to his airplane collection, to his simple walks in the woods with his dog. The Naylor operation had brought him the realization, if nothing else, a private life is a precious thing that can be easily taken away.

The Boys are glad that David Shane won't be part of the operation in New York. He could be such a wet blanket: don't do this, don't do that, get your reports in on time, stay in the house at night. Who did he think he was—their damn father? They had gone out each night to circle the Naylor house because she belonged to them. Asleep or awake, they had her surrounded. Couldn't he see the fun in that? Well, now it didn't matter if he could or couldn't. He was history. His replacement as field commander is Patrick Sullivan and The Boys find that to be more good news. Hallam had worked with Sullivan on another assignment last summer, and he assures the others that Sullivan would be putty in their hands. Sullivan is scared shitless of Dick Simon—shitless. Since The Boys were hand picked by Simon, Sullivan would think twice before he even breathed on them. Patience was all it had taken. A little patience and good work on this backwoods island, and now they were on top of the world. New York. They hoped the witch wouldn't change her mind and decide to stay. But they doubted it, since she'd already made the plane reservations. They would be flying the

friendly skies right along with her—an operative on each side of her, one in front, and one behind. Now this is what undercover work should be—a little action, a little movement.

Agents had already been sent out to secure a safe house—and hopefully houses—on her block in Brooklyn. The Boys want coverage in the front and back, so that necessitated getting into a house on the street behind her as well. When she went out the front door, they would be there. When she went out the back door to sit in her yard, they would be there. If she walked, if she ran, if she stuck her head in the sand, The Boys would sing, “We will be there.” Since she was so fat and out of shape, they doubted there would be any running. The most you could expect from her was a walk in Prospect Park. But they would be there. It would be a great summer, filled with all types of possibilities.



I was packed and ready to go, but I wanted to take one last look at my garden. I had pictures of course, but pictures don’t capture the fresh smell of the soil, the sweetness of the grass, the pungency of the sun’s heat on a row of tomatoes. Call it beginner’s luck, but it had flourished into a spectacular garden. Every plant was huge and lush. As I sat on the garden bench, the hammering began again from the plantation house. You can stop soon, I thought, because I’ll be gone. I simply couldn’t take it anymore. I wasn’t reading and I was definitely doing no writing. Most of my waking moments were spent thinking about the surveillance: the drive-bys and the noise. It was a funny thing about the noise. I grew up in New York City and had probably written through more noise than they were able to create; but here it seemed magnified.

This book was important to me, and if I had to move back to New York to write it, I would move back. My family and my friends would be glad. They had kept telling me to come home, just

come home. Leave all that nonsense there behind you. But I wasn't sure I would be leaving it. What bothered me the most about this whole ordeal was thinking about the hidden hand behind all of it. It took a sick mind to coordinate all this. A sick mind that had turned its attention to my life. Why should I believe that this person was willing to let me go?

Fighting him had been like fighting the air. You can't see it unless it's full of dust, and if it's full of dust, your eyes burn and sting so you still can't see it. And then just as it comes, it goes, almost invisible. Like the letters they had written one night on the dust in my porch screen, "K-O-B." The letters were almost invisible until the sun's ray's hit it on an angle. What was K-O-B suppose to mean? Maybe everything. Maybe nothing. But the letters floated there, a ghostly barrier between me on the porch swing and my view of the water. That's what this whole experience had been like from the beginning—a ghostly presence between me and my enjoyment of my garden, me and a long Sunday drive, me and the friends I used to hold dear. And was I angry at this hidden hand because I had to leave? Did I hate them because of what they'd done to me? Of course. I had asked for so little when I first came to St. Helena in 1996: to be able to enjoy the fruits of my life in peace and quiet. No, it wasn't asking for little, it was asking for less than nothing. A person becomes bitter who has asked for less than nothing and gets even that taken away. What are the depths of anger and hatred when that happens? Deep. Even though you know that you can't afford to wallow in it. Even though you've learned through a lifetime of experience that some things need to be shoved aside if you're going to go on. You are changed by an experience like mine. I would no longer look at this country with the same innocence as before. I would no longer trust bonds of friendship to be unshakable. I heaved a deep sigh and got up from the bench. I had told Betty to please use the harvest from my garden. At least

someone else could enjoy what I could not. With the sound of the hammering and the cawing of crows ringing in my ears, I loaded my bags into my truck and drove away.



In Brooklyn, the Swiss family is finishing up dinner when the doorbell rings. Two men are there who identify themselves as agents for the Drug Enforcement Agency, carrying badges to testify as such. Could they have a few minutes of their time? The men are invited in and offered seats. The taller one's eyes are restless and take in the full spectrum of the room. The bald one sits on the edge of his chair, gesturing with his hands as he talks. Tomorrow they may be FBI agents or CIA but tonight they are DEA, and they tell the Swiss family they are in a position to do their country a service. They have reason to believe that their neighbor, Gloria Naylor, is involved on a high-level with drug-smuggling from Columbia. No, they can't say much more than that for reasons of national security; but they are coming to the Swiss family for help. Monty is only too glad to oblige. He knew there was something funny going on in the duplex next to theirs. She said she was a writer, but how many writers can afford condos like theirs? Then there were her friends, as strange as could be and mostly black. Montgomery Swiss is also black, but his blackness begins and ends with his skin color. He was raised by grandparents who, in effect, taught him to hate himself. It's a white man's world, his grandfather never lost an opportunity to tell him, and you gotta learn to play by their rules, to live like they live. Monty did not disappoint his grandparents. He enrolled at Harvard, took up business administration, and married the only white woman on campus who would have him. Clio, with her chunky body and plain face, was glad to be chosen. Their marriage produced one daughter who Monty was

relieved to see had fair skin and blonde hair. They never tried for a second child. Monty thought he'd better leave well enough alone. The second child might look like him with caramel skin, a pug nose, and full lips.

His short, stocky legs barely touch the floor when he sits in a chair, so he has the habit, like the bald agent in his living room, of sitting on the edge of furniture. He would do anything needed, the agents were told, if it would help bring her to justice. Anything at all. During the whole conversation Clio has said nothing.

"Maybe you'll need to talk this over as a family," the taller agent says directly to Clio.

Monty answers for her. "There's no need to talk over anything. Of course we'll help our government."

"Well," the bald agent tells them, "We'll need to set up your place as a safe house from which we can carry on part of the surveillance. There's a limited amount of equipment needed and there'll be agents coming and going. Will that pose a problem?"

"None at all," Monty assures them. Clio says nothing.

"And of course," the taller agent continues, "you'll be compensated for your trouble. There'll be a per diem for each day we use your spare room."

"How do you know we have a spare room?" Clio finally speaks.

"Ma'am?"

"How do you know we have a spare room? None of that information came up in our conversation."

"We have a layout of all these condos," the bald agent says. "And since you have three bedrooms and only one child, I assumed..."

"And how do you know we only have one child?" Clio asks.

"That's enough, Clio," Monty says.

"No, we don't mind answering," the taller agent says. "To

be brutally honest with you Mrs. Swiss, we've done background checks of all the people on this block who we thought might be in a position to help us. What kind of organization would be if we did not?"

"Of course, of course..." Monty says. "For all you knew, we might be drug smugglers ourselves. I'm glad you checked." He turns to Clio with his teeth gritted. "It's just procedure, sweetheart."

Monty agrees for the agents to start bringing in their equipment the next day. The Swiss family is reminded that they must talk to no one—absolutely no one—about what is going on. When the other agents arrived, they would try to stay out of the family's way as much as possible. The field coordinator, Patrick Sullivan, would be coming to introduce himself and if there was a problem with any of the agents in their home he would be the one to handle it. Any other questions? Monty says he has none. And Clio sighs as she looks down at her hands folded in her lap.

There are two conversations that go on once the door is closed. On the outside the taller agent raises his eyebrow.

"Eager little puppy, wasn't he?"

"That type always gives me the creeps," the bald agent says. "And did you get a load of that wife of his? Not a happy camper. I'd love to be a fly on the wall in that house now."

If he had been a fly he would have been disappointed. Clio has little to say as Monty goes on and on about what a great opportunity this is. Her silence says it all. She's not comfortable with such an arrangement. There was something about those men that just didn't ring true. It would probably be a lot better if they just didn't get involved. But she lets Monty go on and on because she always lets Monty go on and on. He's telling her, even as they undress for bed, that that's what's wrong with this country; not enough people thought of themselves as citizens. Citizens had a civic duty to aid

their government when in need. A little inconvenience was nothing compared to the good they would be doing in bringing a criminal to justice.

As Clio falls off to sleep, she knows that Monty knows that Gloria Naylor is not a drug smuggler. Whatever that visit had been about, it wasn't about that.

Carroll, where Gloria Naylor lives, is a quiet, tree-lined street in Park Slope. It's full of nothing but brownstones that are at least a hundred years old. Traffic is rare because it's two blocks away from 7th Avenue, the main commercial strip for the neighborhood. The Boys are pleased with the setup; they have a rental apartment directly across the street from the Naylor woman, and a safe house with the Swiss family right next door to her. One street over, they have another rental that will give them a view of her backyard. Her brownstone, like the Swiss family's, is a duplex. They both have the first and second floor with privileges to the back yard space. Once they'd known that the move was certain, they placed their bugs in each room of the Naylor condo. Patrick Sullivan, the new field coordinator, thought a bug in each room was excessive, but The Boys disagreed. What if she doesn't talk over the phone and invites a friend by for a private chat? They would need to know what was said, wouldn't they? Besides, Dick Simon would want it that way. That's all they had to say for Sullivan to bend; Dick Simon's name was like magic. Presto, chango, Hallam murmured whenever they got Sullivan to change his mind by evoking Dick Simon's name.

The noise would continue. They know that her study faces Carroll and that her bedroom is in the back of the condo. Paulo comes up with the idea of having car doors slamming when she is trying to read or write in her study. Their continued alliance with the ADL in a city like New York will give them more manpower

than they can could dream of. Paulo's idea, like all good ideas, is simple. They would pull one of their cars into the space under her study window, have the driver get out and slam the front door, reach into the back seat of the car for a package and then slam that door too. The driver would take a walk around the block, come back to the car, slam the doors again, and drive off. Within minutes, the next car would pull up into the empty space and the whole scenario would repeat. Slam. Slam. Slam. Slam. Just a little welcome gift for the witch.

"And just how long will you keep this nonsense up?" Patrick Sullivan asks.

"Until we get tired," Paulo answers. "And we want to go on to another game. What's it to you anyway?"

"Because I'm the one in charge here—that's what."

"Look, Patrick, Dick Simon told me himself that our St. Helena noise campaign was a stroke of genius and it put the target on the run," Paulo says. "Now if you want to come up with a better idea, do it."

"I have lots of ideas for this operation."

"Pray, tell," Ricky says.

"Tweet," Chee says.

"Tweet, tweet," Ricky answers.

"No, guys, we're in the Big Apple now. It's time to crow" Paulo says. "Caw, caw..."

"Caw, caw," the other boys answer back.

"When you're ready to talk sensibly," Patrick Sullivan says, "I'll listen. Until then, I don't give a damn what you do." Sullivan leaves the room, slamming the door behind him.

"Presto, chango," Paulo says. The other boys laugh.



I had mixed emotions about being back in New York. On one hand it was reassuring to have the familiar around me again; on the other I felt that I had been defeated in some way. They had made me leave St. Helena six months before I planned and my garden would be going to the weeds. All of the work I had put into that garden, and for what? But I'd learned a long time ago it was no good to cry over spilled milk. I still had my health, my life even, and it was only mid-June. There were huge empty pots in my backyard, and I could still buy tomato plants to put into them. It wasn't what I had in the South, but it was better than nothing. And of course, there was my work. I could still write, and I'd been blessed with a lovely room in my apartment for doing just that.

My study was my favorite room. It was painted a deep shade of gold and had a built-in bookcase against one long wall. It was on the second floor of the duplex and overlooked Carroll Street. My desk was placed up against the window so I could have a full view of the street. It was almost as quiet as the road that passed my house in St. Helena, even though 7th Avenue was two blocks away. That avenue stayed full of traffic and people unless you went out before 8 AM, when only a newsstand and a coffee shop serving breakfast were open. As I unpacked my research books and rearranged them on my bookcase, I thought about the issue of control. One of the hardest parts of this experience so far was that things had happened around me that I couldn't control. I had been outmanned and outgunned, with them even bringing in friends to betray me. And if they found one to betray me, couldn't they find another? Couldn't they even get to my family? If they came into my house in St. Helena couldn't they come into my apartment in New York? There was nothing to stop them. No laws they had to obey, no higher authority they had to answer to. I couldn't be home seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. If I went out, all they had to do was watch me and then come in to relo-

cate a bug or camera. Or maybe for nothing more than the sake of doing it. What would I be guarding? Nothing except my space and the right to have my space without violation. The most bitter pill of all to swallow was that I couldn't guard my space effectively. All they had to do was wait.

I sat down at my desk, put my head in my hands and sighed. Then I began to hear the slamming. The first one or two didn't register. But when it continued—like clockwork—my consciousness began to register the sound. One car would pull up, the driver would exit the car, disappear for a while, return to the car and pull out. Within minutes another car would take its place, and the same routine would be repeated. Slam. Slam. Slam. Slam. I sat at my desk for half an hour, and it continued for half an hour. At first there was a flush of anger, and then I became very sad. I'd stopped asking, "Why?" a long time ago. Now it was, "What kind of people would do this?" Didn't any of them, as individuals, question the insanity of all this? Or were they just blindly following orders?



She's seventy-two, and thank God the only thing that bothers her is a bit of arthritis. No, to be honest, it's a lot of arthritis. It kicks up badly on cloudy days like today. But it's her turn to be part of the car pool and she doesn't want to disappoint. A Dachau survivor, she became a member of the Anti-Defamation League from the moment she immigrated to America. Now she regrets that she can't give as much as she did before her husband died and left her with a small widow's pension. So, when the opportunity came for her to help in another way, she jumped at it. The only thing she is told is that there is a threat, and it's the only thing she needs to be told. She knows better than anyone what can happen if a threat is allowed to flower and grow. She'd left a whole family in the bur-

ial pits of the German death camps, and it could happen here; it could happen anywhere. When it's her turn to go into the car pool, she goes.

He's twenty-seven and looking for a little action. He's worked on and off as an operative for the NSA since he was recruited just after college. It was mostly low-level stuff, like now, but he's hoping to move up in the ranks. Being in charge of the car pool is one way he can show what he's made of. He's thrilled to be directing fifty cars—fifty. Just let those babies slide into that parking space on Carroll Street and slide out. He's told them that he wants a good, hard slam, no half-hearted crap. No, everything on his watch must go as smooth as silk. It's promotion time. Didn't Mr. Sullivan tell him that his idea about the car alarms was a good one? Every twenty cars or so, set off a car alarm for the target to hear. That would run anybody crazy, especially one who was trying to work at home. He's sure that his idea will get him a memo written about his good work. A memo to the top brass would surely get him assigned to some choice jobs. But you take it a step at a time. In his case, a car at a time. Yes, a good, hard slam.

After a week, The Boys tire of the slamming car doors. They hadn't anticipated that if the witch hears the car doors, so would they. Sullivan says it's driving him crazy, and he wants it to stop. It doesn't have the effect on the target that they planned. She just goes into her back bedroom to read or watch television. Surely there has to be something else they can do.

It's Paulo who comes up with the idea of the drive-bys. Every time she leaves her apartment, one or two cars from the pool drive pass her. Just one or two, each time. On a quiet street like hers, it's sure to be noticed. Maybe not at first, but

eventually Miss Take-Down-Their-License-Plates would begin to see a pattern. And there wasn't a damn thing she could do about it. Down in St. Helena, David had a name for that—what was it?—environmental conditioning or some shit like that. It had bothered the hell out of her in St. Helena, so there was no reason why it shouldn't work in New York. God knows, here they'd have plenty of drivers to help.

They are young and old, Jew and gentile, black and white, and brown and yellow. A cornucopia of the diversity that is New York. Some are in it for a cause, others for the money. They walk where they're told to walk, sit where they're told to sit, and follow when they're told to follow. Above all, they drive when they're told to drive. Turn up 7th Avenue onto Carroll, proceed to Prospect Park West, turn right. After that, they're free to go. Such a simple thing. Most don't notice the lone black woman walking down Carroll, and for the few who do, it doesn't register. Most don't question what this all means, and for the few who have the courage to ask, they're told, in so many words, to mind their business and just do what they've signed up to do. They're part of a puzzle that's overseen by greater minds than theirs. And there is always someone to replace them if they're unhappy. Of those few who have the courage to ask, most stay.



I had a lot of lunches and dinners lined up when I returned to New York. Most of them were friends I'd e-mailed when I was down in St. Helena who wanted to see if I was alright. Two of them were men who I'd come to think of as more than friends: my editor and my agent. I'd been lucky, as far as New York publishing goes, to have the same editor, if not the same publishing house, for

my entire career. I had been with my agent for over thirteen years. By being a constant in my career, these men centered me and made me feel safe. I knew there was always someone watching out, and there would always be someone to listen. They did listen, along with the others, as I told my version of what had happened in St. Helena. How difficult it was to fight with the air, with darkness. And they all offered me, in his or her own way, the same advice: It's over now, get on with your work and your life. They were trying to be kind. I remained silent about the drive-bys. There was nothing they could do, so why distress them?

I don't remember exactly when I picked up the pattern of the drive-bys, but I did. On a street as quiet as mine, it's more than possible that you could walk the two blocks to 7th Avenue and not see a single car. Sometimes one or two of them were there and sometimes they were not. But I began to notice that when I walked down the street, it was never free of traffic. Minutes after leaving my door there would be two or three cars coming down the street. It was every day and constant. If I went out at 7 for a paper, they were there. If I went out at noon for lunch, they were there. If I was going to meet a friend for a movie at night, they were there. I assumed it was their way of telling me that I was not alone, that I was still being watched.

And although I fought it, I was becoming paranoid. If they watched me when I left my apartment were they also watching me inside my home? Were there cameras in the bedroom? Bugs in the living room? I walked from room to room, wondering. I fought the urge to lift up pictures or feel beneath the furniture, looking for cameras and bugs. I knew that to start on that road was to slip into madness. If devices were planted around my house, there was no sane way to find out except by hiring professionals. With my phone tapped, they would know when a technician was coming in enough time to slip back into my home and remove the devices. So, I was

miserable when I left my home and miserable when I returned to it. New York was not proving to be the sanctuary that I had hoped it would be. But it was all I had left, so I dug down deep and held on for all it was worth.



Dick Simon is beyond furious. When he gets this angry, an icy fist forms in the middle of his stomach. Regardless of which way he turns his body, it jabs him in the middle, actually producing physical pain. There have been only a few times in his life when he'd been in this condition, but he's pushed them far back in his memory. He takes the glass globe from his desk and squeezes it in his hand, fighting the urge to fling it through the plate glass window. He closes his eyes and takes two or three deep breaths, hoping to relieve the strangle hold on his insides. It helps a bit, but then he has to open his eyes and stare straight ahead at his computer screen and the cause of this anguish: Gloria Naylor's file. Its latest entry has an inquiry from the CIA about on-going surveillance. Someone she's talked to in New York mattered enough to get an inquiry like this pushed through. It isn't classified; it isn't even an official inquiry. Just an "unofficial request" for information. But it's enough to send his head spinning. If he ignores the request, it might be repeated as an official memo. And he'll have no memos about her coming across his desk. Who could it have been? Her file holds the names of everyone she's spoken to in New York, everyone she's visited, or even drank a cup of coffee with. It's easy enough to run those names and see which one might have ties to the CIA, but that isn't the real issue. The real issue is that someone is listening to her and believing what she says. Believing her enough to make a few phone calls, pull a few strings. Or maybe one of her friends has friends with the connections to do this. There is no telling; it's like a spider

web that keeps branching off into any number of possible scenarios. The easier thing to do—the smart thing—is to go back to the source of the web, find the spider, and destroy it.

At the crux of this new mess is her credibility. Someone believes her. So you go in a little deeper and give her things to talk about that would make her seem like a lunatic. Instead of calling the CIA this friend would be encouraging her to seek professional help. Simon closes the Naylor file. Her file is in the second vault, the Invisible. He turns his attention to the third vault on his screen, the Impossible. This vault only opens with a thumb print. He presses his thumb on the graphic of a lock and the door swings open. Welcome, Richard Simon, the screen reads. You have access up to Level 3. Indicate level. Simon types in “Level 1.” That, he thinks, should be more than enough to drive her crazy.

The Boys are told that a new team will be arriving the next day. They are bringing in equipment and specialists to train them for a new phase of the operation. That’s all Sullivan will tell them except that this phase will be highly classified. They hate to see the way he gloats because for another twenty-four hours, he knows something they don’t. The man is pond scum, Paulo tells the others. This “highly classified” bull-crap won’t boil down to anything new or exciting. They soon find out that they can’t be more wrong. Agent Browne comes to them directly from the home office and he could have stepped out of central casting for a James Bond movie. Lean and mean with sunglasses that he never takes off, the tall agent never smiles, and you get the sense that he never smiled, even as a child. In a no-nonsense fashion he tells them that he’s there to teach them how to use the equipment that he’s unpacking from his huge attaché case.

The first thing he took out looked like a satellite dish, but it’s small and light enough to be held in one hand. The second thing

made Hallam catch his breath—a fully equipped computer that doesn't weigh more than eight ounces and can be held in Agent Browne's other hand. He plugs the satellite dish into the computer's docking station. Now, he says, a brief demonstration. Paulo is told to turn on the dish, and a dull hum is heard in the room.

"Now," Agent Browne says, "aim the dish toward my head and type in any word into the computer."

Paulo types in "hello."

"You typed 'hello,'" Agent Browne says. "Now, type in a whole sentence." Paulo types. Agent Browne still has his back to Paulo. "You typed 'Bring me the keys to the kingdom,'" Browne says. "And how do I know? I heard it." He taps his forehead. "I know what you're probably thinking, and believe me, this is no magic trick. You have in your hands some of the most advanced technology in the world. We've known for a couple of decades that sound can be produced in someone's head by radiating it with microwaves. It's now been refined to work with this computer program. This program translates key strokes into bursts of microwaves that bypass the ears and hit the auditory section of the brain. You are, in effect, speaking directly to the brain. And the brain 'hears' you. For all the target knows, she's just had a fleeting thought that originated within her.

The room is totally quiet for a moment as The Boys take in the significance of what they're being told. Paulo is the first to speak.

"What's the vocabulary range?"

"Seventy-two thousand words," Agent Browne answers.

"And it works through walls?" Hallam asks.

"Within fifty feet of the microwave dish."

"These apartments aren't fifty feet deep," Ricky says. "So she's never out of range, no matter where she goes."

"That's true," Agent Browne says. "But you're in a safe

house with civilians. I'd suggest that you limit it to her bedroom on the other side of this wall. These people will start asking too many questions if you're running all over their house with a satellite dish."

"This is going to be terrific," Paulo says. "She'll be bouncing off the walls."

"It can be an effective tool," Browne says. "But there are - procedures you have to follow. And you have to keep a record of everything you 'say' to her for your reports. The computer will keep its own records, but that goes into a file that you can't access. Are there any more questions?"

"And we can say anything to her?"

"As long as it falls within those seventy-two thousand words. And you'll read about this later in the procedure file, but I'll tell you now. No matter what you 'say' to her, it must never be the truth. The point of this phase of the operation is to get internal conflict going within the target. You should have gathered enough intelligence by now to have plenty of material to draw from. For example, if you've found out over the last few months that she has political leanings that are at odds with the present administration, you could 'say' to her, 'I should buy a gun and kill Bill Clinton. Always keep it in the first person so she'll believe the thoughts are coming from her own head.'"

"But how do we know if it's working?" Paulo asks.

"Because," Agent Browne answers, "she'll be begging friends to recommend a good psychiatrist."



For me, the hardest part of this story began then. Did I lose my mind in the summer of 1996? It certainly felt like it. I tried to take the advice of friends and get back to work, but it was difficult to concentrate. Writing a book is harder than most people realize.

even for a professional. I had my research material all lined up, but I would read one or two pages, and my mind would drift. Always back to the surveillance. I don't know what bothered me the most: the surveillance or the fact that they had the ability to hack into my computer. I had to accept that every thought I wrote down was possibly monitored. It was like living my life in a glass cage at a zoo. People I hadn't invited into my life had entered anyway and were watching my every move. After a week I gave up trying to read my research material. Maybe I was pushing myself too hard; maybe I should just give myself a rest for a while. I started channel surfing on the television, going from movie to movie. When I felt I'd run out of good movies, I turned to my own video collection. I did this for hours at a time, just wanting to escape deeper and deeper into myself.

I remember I was watching Mel Gibson's "Braveheart" for the fifteenth time when the first thought came to me: *I am a bitch*. It seemed to have just floated up from the bottom of my mind. It had nothing to do with what I was thinking because at that moment I wasn't thinking anything at all. I had been watching a particularly gory battle scene. *I am the worst bitch in the world. I want to kill myself*. Where was this stuff coming from? I frowned and rubbed my forehead. Why was I thinking these things? This wasn't me. A thought came that hit me to the heart, *I hate Jews*. This was something I had been wrestling with since leaving St. Helena. Jews weren't the only people making up my surveillance, but they had been the first. It hurt me to see them working together to make my life miserable when I had done nothing to them. I didn't think that I hated them, but I did fear them now. I guess there's an element of hatred in anything that we fear. But no, I wasn't going to go down that path. I had been fighting hard not to be anti-Semitic, so why would I think that I hate Jews? *I am a bitch. I want to kill myself*. Dear God, I thought, I'm going crazy. And then, just as the thoughts came, they left. That is, until I got ready to go to bed.

I had just settled in under the covers when the thought came:

I hope I die in my sleep. If this doesn't stop, I thought, I'm going to have to get some help. *Bitch.* I'm going straight to the first psychiatrist I could find. I had been under therapy back in my 20s when I was going through a particularly hard time, but a part of me always thought of it as self-indulgent. What did people do who did not have health insurance or the money to spend on a psychiatrist? Well, they just muddled through, using their inner strength and a dose of common sense. If they had a supportive family or good friends, they talked to them for a lot less than two hundred dollars an hour. I want *to kill myself.* I didn't need psychoanalysis. What I needed was some sort of medication. I had been through a lot in 1996, enough to throw anybody's brain off track. *I am a bitch.* A chemical imbalance. It was some sort of chemical imbalance in my brain that was bringing these thoughts. *I have no friends. Everybody hates me like I hate Jews.* I could ignore them and maybe they'd go away; or I could, for once in my life, stop trying to be Wonder Woman, toughing this out alone. I told myself it was okay to ask for help if I needed it; and this seemed to be one of those times. I knew, deep down, that I wasn't crazy, but if these voices kept on, I would be.

I lasted almost two weeks before I called my doctor and made an appointment. Two weeks of being bombarded, mostly at night, with dirty names and messages to kill myself. It was a great relief when it was time for my appointment. I liked Dr. Beston. She was a no-nonsense type of person with a gentle and kind heart. When I talked, she really listened, and I got the sense that no matter how many patients were in the waiting room, I was the center of her world for that moment. After she examined me, I took a deep breath and told her about the voices and the strange thoughts that kept popping into my head. It was the first time I had voiced

these concerns out loud, and my heart was beating fast. I was afraid that she would think I was crazy. It was the same fear that had kept me from confiding in my family or friends.

There was concern in her large brown eyes, and she gently placed her hand on my shoulder. "Don't worry," she said. "We'll fix this."

Her touch was so soothing it brought tears to my eyes. She recommended a colleague of hers who she said was a very good psychiatrist and would give me the medication that I needed. She made the appointment herself before I left her office. I felt elated as I left. I had finally taken some steps to get myself help.

The weather outside was beautiful. It was one of those rare August days in New York that weren't humid. I treated myself to a nice lunch and walked for a while. My head had been clear of the voices since I left the house and they weren't plaguing me now. It came to me that I never heard the voices when I was outside of the house, and I wondered why. There was no telling. The brain is a complicated thing, I thought, and maybe now I would get some help in unraveling it.

Dr. Davis worked out of a suite of offices on the Upper West side of Manhattan. He was one of those rare psychiatrists who didn't take August off. A tall man with nut-brown skin and prematurely graying hair, he moved with the grace of a dancer as he extended his hand to shake mine and invite me into his office. Once you looked past the gray sideburns, it was clear that he was barely thirty. What he lacked in age, he made up for in his manner. There was something about him that put me at ease immediately. He was like the overstuffed leather sofa in his office; you sank into its softness, but there were steel springs holding you up.

After an initial awkwardness, I opened my mouth and began to talk. It all came pouring out of me: the experiences in St. Helena, the surveillance, the harassment with slamming doors when

I first returned to New York, and finally, the voices that kept pushing thoughts into my mind. His gentle eyes never left mine except to take a few notes on a yellow pad. I know I'm not crazy, I concluded, so where are these thoughts coming from? He told me that the brain is one vast electrical field that is constantly sending messages between nerve cells. But sometimes, for various reasons, that system breaks down and a lot of irregularities occur. One such is hearing voices. It doesn't mean that a person is crazy; it's just an imbalance in the brain's chemicals. It can usually be corrected quite well with medication. Schizophrenia is no disgrace. A lot of Americans suffer from it. He recommended that I see him once a week for the next few months. He wanted to monitor the effect of the medication, and there were issues I needed to resolve about my experiences of the past year. You've been through a lot, he told me. Many people would have broken down long ago under your kind of pressure. Did I have good family support?

I told him that I was single without any children, but I was close to my mother and two sisters who now lived in North Carolina. My mother had been widowed for three years after my father died in his sleep from a heart attack. At first I had told her about the surveillance, but little else. I saw how distressed it made her, so why keep burdening her with things that she could do little about? I felt the same way about my sisters so, for the most part, I was battling this thing alone.

"Well, you don't have to be alone anymore," he said. "If you're willing to take advantage of it, you have me."

A flood of relief washed over me. I wanted to sit on that sofa and cry. Just trying to survive day by day, I hadn't realized the kind of pressure I was living with. That had been a lifelong problem with me, rarely asking for help. I always thought of myself as a strong person, fearing that if I shared too much of a problem with family or friends, I was whining. In my relationships, I was always the one who listened, not the one who complained. I was talking

even less over the phone. I believed that my phone was tapped, and airing my grievances would just give them a measure of how they were succeeding in disrupting my life. Very slowly I was building a wall between myself and family and friends. Now Dr. Davis was offering me a way out. Talk to me, he was saying. Talk to me and whatever you say will stay in this office.

For the next several weeks I took him at his word. I spoke about all the things I had pushed down inside me in order to live a measure of my life sanely. The rage that would wash over me, from knowing they were hacking into my computer as I used it. The despair from knowing that I was being followed into supermarkets, drug stores, or on a walk in the park. The doubt that I now had about friendship, knowing that they had the power to infiltrate my life and use my friends as operatives for their cause. And the shame, the shame that I was becoming anti-Semitic because of the involvement of Jews in all this. We spent a lot of time on that issue because I was still going to bed at night with the chorus of *I hate Jews... I hate Jews...* resounding in my head. Wasn't the medicine supposed to take all of that away? He said he could increase the dosage, but hadn't I said that I only heard the voices when I was watching television in my bedroom or retiring for the night? Perhaps it was better to stay at that dosage and give the medicine a chance to kick in fully. He would rather err on the side of caution than rush and over-medicate me. The voices will go away, he said. Let's use a little patience. I trusted Dr. Davis, so I didn't push the issue. But he turned out to be wrong. Things didn't get better. They got worse.



The Boys decide to take the fall semester off in order to stay with the operation. There is finally a little movement. They must be getting to the witch because she's seeing a psychiatrist.

They have little else to go on because she never speaks to her family or friends about hearing voices. If it were them, they'd be bouncing off the walls by now. They hate to admit it, but there is a grudging respect for her strength growing within the operation. One agent on duty even had the nerve to say, "When are we gonna leave this woman alone and go on to something important? How many times can you call someone a bitch?" The Boys made sure that Sullivan heard about the remark, and that the agent left with a memo on his file and whispers of a demotion. This was enough of a warning for the rest of them—just do what you're told or you're history. The orders for this operation came from the top, and their job was to follow them until they were told to close up shop.

Not getting feedback from the Naylor woman was like flying without instruments into a fog. There is little by which they can measure the success of the operation. She wasn't using her computer or writing about the voices. She wasn't talking on the phone. So what could they do? They know the key is with that shrink. They know how much she trusts him because she told friends on the phone. He's helping her to get to the bottom of "issues," and that could only be the voices. Or maybe it's something else. Maybe he's giving her the encouragement to be a bigger pain in the ass than she already is.

With the operation stymied for a few weeks, Sullivan agrees with The Boys that it's now time to send in a couple of field agents to talk with her shrink. They'd run his background and hadn't found anything he could be blackmailed with. He was gay but out of the closet, so there went that. They hoped that the fear factor would weigh in. It's amazing how many people crumble as soon as you flash a government ID at them. Families talk. Priests talk. Even shrinks talk. This time they will go in with both guns blazing as themselves, the National Security Agency. Most people, even professionals, didn't know what in the hell the NSA is or does, so

that ignorance helped to cover a lot of lies. Once they found out that half of what you told them wasn't true, you would have already gotten your information and gone. Then what were they going to do? Sue?

Dr. Davis is not proving to be an easy mark. He actually reads the badges of the two agents who show up at his office door. They do see that glimpse of fear that they're used to, but the doctor is cautious and guarded. They tell him that they're there on official business and would appreciate it if the doctor treated their conversation as classified. Dr. Davis nods and sits there patiently, waiting for them to continue. The younger agent takes charge of the conversation while the older one glances around the room.

"It's about a patient of yours. Gloria Naylor," the younger agent says.

"Yes?" It's clear that Dr. Davis isn't going to give up any information voluntarily.

"This is a very delicate matter, Dr. Davis. One of top national security. And we'd appreciate your help with it."

"How can I help?"

"We'd like a copy of the notes you've taken or any tape recordings of her visits with you."

"That's out of the question. My files are confidential."

"We understand that, but you would be doing your government a great service if you could see your way clear to..."

"How did you know she was seeing me?"

"Sir?"

"How did you know that she's a patient of mine?"

The younger agent smiles. "We're the National Security Agency, Dr. Davis. Surely you know the answer to that one."

"Well, here's something I don't know—why? Why do you want my notes?"

"If I could tell you, I would, but as I've said, it's a matter of top national security."

"I'm going to be brutally honest with you gentlemen. I don't believe one word of what you've told me."

"That we're from the National Security Agency?"

"That this business has anything at all to do with national security. And so I believe this conversation is over."

"We came here in good faith, doctor."

"So you can leave in the same way."

The older agent finally speaks. "There are ways to get your cooperation."

"Are you threatening me?"

"Just trying to be helpful," the older agent says. "You don't want us as enemies, Dr. Davis."

"What I want is for you to leave my office. This conversation is over, gentlemen."

As they rise to go, the younger agent produces a card that he gives to Dr. Davis. "Just in case you change your mind." The card is blank except for a name and number.

Dr. Davis is trembling inside as he closes the door on the two agents. He takes a deep breath to calm himself and sits down in his chair. Gloria Naylor is right. She is being watched. Some of the things she's said, which he'd classified as paranoid, would need a re-evaluation. There was something they wanted that phone taps and computer hacking wasn't giving them. He could only guess that it was a reaction. Otherwise, why come to him? She was not responding sufficiently to some action of theirs. But what could that action be? The surveillance? The drive-bys? What wasn't she talking about except to him? Of course—the voices. She had often expressed her fear that people might think her mentally unbalanced if she told them about the voices in her head. But how would the NSA know about her internal thoughts? Could she have mentioned it to at least one friend or family member? Could it be from her prescriptions? Haldol was commonly used for schizophrenia. Dr.

Davis doesn't think about the unthinkable, that they knew about the voices because they'd put them there. The only thing he knows is that he must protect his patient. Maybe he is being foolish, going head-to-head with the NSA, but right is right.

When she comes in the next week, he doesn't tell her about the visit he had. That's his problem, not hers. Her problem is to find a way to get on with her life in spite of the surveillance and whatever other games they're playing. He tells her that she must pull from her inner strength, and believe it or not, she had a lot of it. Don't disregard what's kept you going under months of pressure. You're a writer, he tells her, so cut off the television and write. He feels that it was a good session because she leaves in good spirits.

There is a break between patients so he opens his mail. In the pile is a letter from the IRS, informing him that they wanted to audit his taxes for the last three years. He knows, without a doubt, that this is tied to his visit from the National Security Agency. This is his punishment for saying no. Well, if this is the worst they can do, he thinks, then I got off pretty easily. Then it hits him what had been bothering him about that visit—they let go too easily. Much too easily. He didn't want to be paranoid, but he's found himself in a set of circumstances that might demand a little paranoia. How else might they get the information that they wanted from him? Tapping his phone would only give them limited information, so he rules that out. But bugging his office was a definite possibility. He looks around at the stuffed sofa, the wall-to-wall bookcases, the side tables and lamps. There is no end to the places where they could have planted a bug in his office. He decides to call his little brother.

Dr. Davis uses his colleague's telephone to put in a call to his brother who is a private investigator working out of a large agency based in Jersey City. Their main focus is corporate crime, and he's heard no end to stories about the "sweeps" that they do to

make sure that secret negotiations are kept just that way. They work with some of the most advanced technology available, and it takes his brother a little less than ten minutes to find the bug that had been placed underneath a side table.

"This is high end stuff," his brother tells him. "Whoever's after you doesn't mind spending big bucks. Do you know who it could be?"

"No," he tells him. "I have no idea at all."

"Well, not to worry," his brother says. "I'll do weekly sweeps for a while to make sure that you stay clean. But usually, when they get found out, they resort to other tactics."

Dr. Davis hopes that doesn't mean they'll break in and steal the files while tossing the place to make it look like vandalism. He decides that he'll keep the Naylor files at home for a while in his safe. He heaves a deep sigh. How did he manage to get in the middle of this mess?

Dick Simon is determined to have a quiet meal at home. He will not think, as he's been thinking for every day of the last week, about Gloria Naylor. He tosses himself a light salad with goat cheese and sun dried tomatoes, and breaks out a good bottle of Chardonnay. He turns on the radio which stays at his favorite station of light jazz. He takes a moment to look around at his living room. It's almost monastic in its design: everything is modern and sparse. He likes the simplicity of his home: the eyes don't have to work hard to appreciate the clean lines of the coffee table, the curve of the couch. He takes a bite of his salad—perfect—and a good swallow of his wine. He finishes the first glass quickly and pours himself another. He can feel the tension leaving his spine and the back of his neck.

The thought comes to him involuntarily, stupid pills. That's what they were taking up in New York—stupid pills. It's the only

way to explain yet another botched operation. His hand tightens around the wine glass. He's not going to think about that now. But who was he kidding? This woman, this operation, is like a thorn in his side. He remembers seeing a nature program on television where a lion was driving himself crazy trying to gnaw at a thorn bush that was sending splinters into his back paw. The animal circled and raged, circled and raged, until he fell into a frenzy. Half-crazed, the lion became a danger to his mates and even to his cubs. He was not going to be, like some dumb animal, running into the forest and ranting out of his head because of incompetence in New York. The shrink found the bug. He shakes his head in disbelief. The damn shrink found the damn bug that shouldn't have been there in the first damn place. They wanted feedback, The Boys had whined. Well, you get that by the intelligence you accumulate. Are her activities decreasing? Is she closing herself off from family and friends? Is there a depressed tone in her voice when she speaks on the phone? Does she speak on the phone at all? Are friends calling her or is she calling them? Any number of ways you could tell if a person was losing touch with her world. Is she working or is she spending all day in front of the television? All of that, and more, could tell you what you wanted to know—unless you were overdosing on stupid pills. Sullivan was going to have to go. Someone's head needed to roll in light of the new debacle.

Simon fears that he's going to have to take over the operation himself. He would hate that because it would mean he had made an error in judgment when appointing the current field coordinator. And he never made errors in judgment. But there it was, looming inside of him, the bottom. One slip. One lousy slip is all it would take. But no, it hadn't been his error. It was Sullivan's. Sullivan had come highly recommended, pulled from an A list. Simon had nothing to do with making up that list. If there was fault, it lay with whoever that was. When the heat came—if the heat came—it could be directed that way.

He looks down at his salad and realizes that he's lost his appetite. He dumps it in the garbage, takes his wine to the sofa, and sits down. He leans back, closes his eyes, and lets the music wash over him. If you don't get the results you want from Level 1, he thinks, you move to Level 2. And Level 2 was serious business. Level 2 could easily run someone out of their mind. It would be just what she deserved. Wasn't she running him crazy? He hadn't had a moment's peace since her name first came across his desk. He curses Eunice for bringing this all to him. He should have known that anything—anything—connected to his sister had the potential for disaster. She was content down there in St. Helena with the Naylor woman gone, but now Naylor had become a thorn in his side.

He listens for a while to Kenny G, doing what wasn't humanly possible with a saxophone, and thinks about his own power. He has the technology in hand to do the impossible. If he unleashes that power, no one would believe her as she goes quietly and totally insane. It's nothing. He wouldn't feel guilty about it because she'd brought it on herself. She and whatever friend that was, sending him requests from the CIA, she and this shrink who thinks he's Dick Tracy. No, she has no one to blame for this but herself.

Kicking the operation up to Level 2 means that he will have to make a trip to New York. The Boys need to understand the seriousness of what they'd now be doing. He wonders if they were the ones who talked Sullivan into planting a bug in the shrink's office. It smacks of something that they would do. But Sullivan was the one in charge. He should have known better. So what to do now? Pick another field coordinator from the A list or wing it himself? He decides that he'll be in charge for a while. If Level 2 was handled properly, there would be no operation left after the next few months.

The Boys wait in anticipation of Dick Simon's visit as if he's the Pope. They haven't seen him since their high school graduation on the NSA's campus. He had taken a group of the top students out to dinner, telling them that they were the future of their country. They all dismissed it as the regular bull-shit, but it was thrilling to be that close to someone so high up in the agency. His reputation had only grown over the years. He was known as a hard-ass and a stickler for details, but if you worked hard, he could be fair. Still he wasn't someone you'd want on your list of enemies. The agents call him quietly among themselves the Prince of Darkness. They make sure The Boys don't hear them. Those four have proven to be nothing but snitches, and no one wants his head to be the next to roll. The Boys know what the other agents feel about them, and they don't care. They'd been used to being outsiders in the colleges they'd come from, but this time they have the inside track because Dick Simon had picked them personally for the operation. They felt they should only answer to him, but they were worried now that they might have to answer about the bug put in the shrink's office. They decide that if it comes up, they will place the blame on Sullivan, who was now history and couldn't point a finger back at them.

When Simon walks into the room, The Boys are surprised momentarily by his size. He had grown to over seven feet in their minds, and here is a man well under six feet tall and of slight build. But there's no denying the authority that he carries in every move and turn of his head. This is a man who is used to unquestioning obedience. To their great relief, he tells them that he's not here to talk about the past of this operation, but its future. There had been bad judgment calls and mistakes that wouldn't be repeated. He was wiping each of their slates clean so they could have a fresh start under his direction. The

Boys want to crow but they think better of it. They would do that later when he was gone. Something tells them that Simon might not appreciate such antics.

“I’ve brought you a new toy,” Simon tells them. “But this is serious business.” He motions to the agent who walked in with him.

The agent unlocks his attaché case and pulls out what looks like a miniature satellite dish with a hand-held computer attached to it. It looks very similar to the setup they’d already been using to radiate the Naylor woman’s head with microwaves. Anticipating the next obvious question, Simon continues, “This is vastly different from what you’ve been using because it gives you feedback. You know what an EEG is—a machine that reads brain waves. Well, this is the mother of all EEGs because it translates the brain waves that make up thought. Every time you think a word or a sentence, you hear it inside your head, don’t you? This machine hears it as well and prints it out onto this screen.”

“This is major shit,” Hallam says before catching himself. “Excuse me, Mr. Simon.”

“No, you’re right,” Simon says. “It is major. Imagine the intelligence possibilities of being able to read someone’s mind.”

“It’s a world without secrets,” Paulo says.

“No more secrets,” Simon says. “We’ve unlocked the last frontier where secrets can be kept—within the human mind.”

“What’s the vocabulary range?” Paulo asks.

“One hundred thousand words in English. But we’ve programmed in many more languages than that. The best part of this for you is that once you’ve read her mind, you can respond with the microwave hearing device, and she’ll hear you the same way she’s been hearing you for weeks.”

“So it’s like she’s holding a conversation with herself,” Hallam says.

“Exactly,” Simon replies. “It’s called synthetic telepathy. She’ll go running back to her shrink, of course, but no amount of medication will help her. In a week, at the most, she’ll be climbing the walls.”

“We’ll actually be reading her mind.” Hallam shakes his head. “It doesn’t get any better than this.”

“I’ll be leaving Agent Carlyle here with you to take you through the technical training, but it’s a simple enough system to work once you get the hang of it. Good luck, boys.”



I’d known for a while that something was wrong with the Swiss family next door. Looking out my window, I’d catch glimpses of strangers coming and going around their place. When they were gone, there’d be bumping and footsteps inside their condo. Most of the noise could be heard through my bedroom wall, which I shared with one of their back rooms. I assumed that part of my surveillance team was working out of their place. It would make sense if they were. The Swiss home was a safe nearby place to store their electronic equipment and plan their strategies. I wondered what type of people would allow something like that to go on in their house week after week. They were being paid, of course, but they would have to give up their privacy as well as allow someone else’s privacy to be violated under their very roof. As I smelled the stench of Monty Swiss’ daily barbecue, I wondered how much they knew. When the operatives were over there, laughing and talking about me, did the Swiss family join in? Or did they have so much contempt for me that they didn’t care what was being done to me? Maybe the truth was somewhere in between or not in that area at all. Maybe they were just going along with whatever program they’d been handed. But then again it didn’t matter if it was the

truth or a lie. It was the government, wasn't it? When the government called, you answered, never worrying about the big picture. The big picture, after all, had nothing to do with you. You were just doing your part. Neighbors turned in neighbors, friends turned in friends; family turned in family. It happened repeatedly throughout history, so why should it be any different now? I knew that I couldn't do it, but there were more people like the Swiss family than there were like me. The government could always depend upon the fact that there were legions of people waiting in line to help.

In a way I was glad that I had figured out that they were right next door. It helped to explain so much when the voices came back in full force. The voices never happened in any room of my apartment except the bedroom, and they were in the room that was right behind my bedroom wall. I truly believe if it wasn't for that bit of knowledge and what I later pulled from the internet, I would have lost my mind.

We rule the world...

I was watching television when a strange hissing sound came into my head.

You hate Jews...

I don't hate anyone, I thought.

Yes you do. You hate Jews...

I'll be glad when the medicine kicks in, I thought, so all of this can stop.

Medicine can't help you. Nothing can help you. You need to die...

Why would I want to die?

Because you hate Jews... and Eskimos. You hate Eskimos. The Eskimo people are unhappy with you now.

This is stupid.

This is not stupid. These are facts being brought to you by the Eskimo people.

And I laughed. I laughed because it was too horrible to think that someone had actually entered my mind. To believe that would be the first step on the road to madness. I was sitting there, talking to myself because I suffered from schizophrenia. I wasn't crazy, I was sick.

Yes you are sick. And you can end it all now by killing yourself.

Somehow I'll get through this. I'll dig down deep. The human spirit can...

Fuck you. And fuck the human spirit. Just kill yourself.

I'll never kill myself.

Oh, you will. You will...

And so it would go on, night after night. Accusations and abuse. Abuse and accusations. I told Dr. Davis that the medication wasn't working. The voices always came back at night. He suggested that I take the pills just before I went to bed to see if that would stop the voices. It didn't. But one night, on a whim, I decided to sleep on the couch in my study. My head was clear as a bell. When I decided to do it again on the second night, I heard bumping and thumping on the other side of my study wall. Then there was a strange popping sound at the base of my nose. The voices returned.

You can run but you can't hide...

I blocked all thoughts from my mind.

Did you hear us, bitch? You can run but you...

The voice faded away the moment I got up and went back into my bedroom. There was a brief reprieve before I heard more thumping and footsteps on the other side of my bedroom wall.

Face it, bitch. You need to kill yourself.

Now I knew for certain. Whatever was going on, they were doing it to me. These voices were not originating in my own mind. But how were they doing it? How could they read my mind?

Nobody's reading your mind, bitch. You're crazy.

I couldn't spend the night, running from room to room. These were attached brownstones. They could follow me wherever I went. If I was going to be tortured, let it be in my own bed. Somehow they were speaking to my mind, but I didn't have to answer.

So you're not going to talk to us anymore. Come on, please, it's so much fun.

Whoever these people were, they were monsters. To play inside of someone's brain.

We're not monsters, bitch. You're the monster.

I tossed and turned until two in the morning. And then I gave up trying to sleep. I would have to take a couple of pills if I wanted any rest.

That's right, take the sleeping pills. Take the whole bottle and end it all right now.

The pills worked, and I finally went to sleep. I woke up in about six hours and I felt refreshed. But there was the usual greeting in my head.

Good morning, bitch. Did you sleep well?

Go screw yourself.

Such language. Is that the way you talk to someone who wants to be your friend?

I blanked my mind again and went downstairs to the kitchen to make a cup of coffee. My hands were shaking as I measured the coffee into the coffee maker. Waiting for it to brew, I sat at the kitchen table and did some hard thinking. Somewhere out there had to be an answer for what was happening to me. I was going to surf the internet that morning to see what I could come up with.

There were two areas that interested me the most: electronic surveillance and mind control. I went to the website Deja.com, which had an internal search engine for all news groups

on the web. I typed in “electronic surveillance” and immediately hit a gem. A man named John St. Clair Akwei, a former employee of the National Security Agency, was bringing a civil suit against the agency for electronic harassment from October of 1990 to May of 1991. Akwei claimed that through use of the most advanced computers in the world, the NSA has the ability to read the EEGs of a person wirelessly to determine what they’re thinking. He also claimed that there is a domestic surveillance in operation that tracks tens of thousands of Americans through covert agents and phoney business fronts. It all began to fall into place and make sense to me. I didn’t know how or why, but I had gotten tangled in a net that involved this agency. I didn’t have a chemical imbalance, and that’s why the medication wasn’t working. I printed John St. Clair Akwei’s entire lawsuit against the NSA and went in search of more information on mind control. Typing in “mind control” on a search engine eventually brought me to the Mind Control Forum on the internet. It’s an impressive site with, among other things, links to similar sites, a research archive, and a section for victims’ stories.

I spent a lot of time on the victims’ stories because I was looking for experiences that might mirror mine, or for stories that seemed to ring true. I narrowed it down to three women. The first was Barbara Hartwell, who had worked for the CIA and was now blowing the whistle on them for the abuses she experienced under the MK Ultra program. MK Ultra ran from the 1950s to the 1960s officially, and was a research program that tested the effects of LSD and other biological agents on unwitting victims to see if the drugs could be used for mind control and behavior modification. The second story that intrigued me was Eleanor Whites. She had done extensive documentation on the unclassified technology that could be used to

produce microwave hearing as well as synthetic telepathy. The third woman was Cheryl Welsh, who formed a group called Citizens Against Human Rights Abuses. Welsh had done exhaustive research on the background and history of mind control in government experimentation. Eleanor White and Cheryl Welsh designed their websites for people who simply will not believe that this technology has existed or that the U.S. government would have a hand in tormenting unwilling subjects with it.

Their problem was the same as mine and other victims of mind control technology: how do you get people to believe? Unfortunately, information on mind control is sandwiched between reports of underground tunnels where gray aliens work for the U.S. government and sightings of UFOs. Quack stuff. It made me sad because I knew that there were people out there crying for help.

Most people who love their country don't trust their government. Even if you got them to concede that the government has such technology, their next question would be, "How do you know that it's happening to you?" Your only response would be, "I know it's happening to me because it's happening to me." I knew, as I sat in front of that computer for hours, that I wasn't crazy. I knew that I would never tell myself to commit suicide. That I wouldn't call myself a bitch from morning to night. And if I wasn't doing it, who was?



The Boys sit transfixed before the small computer screen. A green line, indicating the brain wave activity of the Naylor woman, scrolls across the screen. On the other side of the wall, she's in bed, tossing and turning, trying to get comfortable. They catch their breath in excitement as the words appear at the bottom of the screen; *This pillow is too soft*. Paulo can't help himself; every

time he sees that a tingling occurs at the bottom of his stomach. To be inside of someone's mind has to be the sexiest thing in the world. There was nowhere left on earth to go, no new frontiers. This was it; they were touching someone's soul. Each time that it's his turn, he trembles just a little as he "answers" her. *The pillow isn't too soft. Your head is too hard.* After typing those words, he presses the "send" key and there is a slight hum from the satellite dish. *Leave me alone.* Jesus, would you look at that. She heard them. They've done it a dozen times by now, but every time it's like a little miracle. So this is what it feels like to be God, Paulo thinks.

But things aren't working out as they had planned. They had expected her to be crazed, and instead she was angry. It was all that crap she was printing out from the internet. Nothing but stuff from losers like her. And what was she going to do with it anyway? Send a copy to her congressman? That always gives them a good laugh. Dear Mr. Congressman, there are bugs in my head and I want you to do something about it right away. Attached is the testimony of other people with bugs in their heads too. They are not in your district, but I am, so what do you propose to do about it? Sometimes to further amuse themselves, they pretend to be the congressmen and answer her letter. Dear Constituent, I want you to know that I have always been a strong supporter of people with bugs in their heads. This office is going to do everything possible to remedy the situation. We are sending you a can of Raid to spray up your nose until we can work on the proper legislation.

It isn't much, but it gets them through the day. They are turning out to be long days again. The witch isn't staying in her bedroom much, so they can't "zap" her as they've come to call what they are doing. She's spending more and more time at the library or sitting in front of her computer. She doesn't talk to her friends on the phone about the surveillance anymore, and there is a growing confidence in her voice. They think they know what her next step will be. She's going to try and get in touch with the other

losers on the internet through a chat room or a newsgroup. That should bring in a bit more fun as she sits there, telling them her tales of woe or listening to theirs. Two weeks go by and all she does is read websites and print out information. Maybe it's time to pay attention to what she thinks is important enough to print out. She's staying away from the real loony-tune stuff like alien abductions and invisible government agents who can walk through walls. Her interest seems to lie in whistleblowers like Akwei and Hartwell. They were nothing but traitors who had turned against the very people who had given them careers. Cheryl Welsh was a certified lunatic, regardless of how much documentation she'd found about the very technology they were using. But knowledge is power. They'd learned that from the business they were in if they learned nothing else. The Naylor woman was gaining knowledge from a few carefully chosen websites. Now, it won't be easy—maybe impossible—to run her crazy. That is their goal. They want her mind. They already owned every bit of information about her life, and her mind was the only thing left.

They are angry with her for making it so difficult for them. Why didn't she just go along with the program, have her nervous breakdown, and let them go on to other assignments, or at least get back into school for the spring semester.

The Boys often talk among themselves about how she's holding up. All the knowledge she'd acquired along the way—the surveillance, the computer hacking, the voices—is only a burden to her; she can't do anything with it. Yet, there she is, day after day, in front of that computer or running off to the library. What in the hell keeps her going? They decide it's simple spite. She knows they're all around her, and so this is her way of saying, *Fuck you*. Well fuck you too lady. This is just the beginning of what they can do to her. They don't have to stay confined to her bedroom. Their equipment is light enough to carry from room to room in order to

zap her. And if the Swiss family is home, they'll just tell them that it's a new type of listening device that they've added to her surveillance. Monty Swiss is such a pathetic idiot that he'll believe anything they tell him about the Naylor woman. The wife is the one to watch out for. They know she hadn't bought their story from day one. But so what? She has no trouble cashing the checks they get for use of the spare room. So it's going to be from room to room, if necessary, as long as the witch stays within the house.



My only peace from the voices was in the library. As soon as I walked through those doors, I felt my head clearing up. I thought about how life can bring you full circle. As a child I used the library for a refuge, losing myself and traveling to other worlds beyond my own. Here I was again, using it as a refuge, but this time to claim my own world back. What it boiled down to was that as a writer, I thought for a living. Now those thoughts were under attack. I think I kept going because a part of me refused to believe that it was real, while a greater part of me was horrified by the process. To be able to read someone's mind, not in the year 3000, but right here in Brooklyn in 1996. It was the ultimate use of power, the ultimate rape.

And what could I do about it? I wasn't going to spend my time, like other victims I'd read about on the internet, going to lawyers, to legislators, to human rights organizations, all to no avail. Although most of the world is ignorant of it, there is massive documentation that mind control technology exists. The problem is that while you can prove it exists, you can't prove that it's happening to you. Its very application

mimics schizophrenia since it's designed to put voices in your head. As horrible as it was for me, I couldn't help thinking about the horror for other victims. To have to keep these things to yourself because no one will believe you. I knew how lonely that could be. I knew what it was like to have dinner with friends and to talk about everything but what weighed heaviest on your heart. To visit family members and force yourself to be cheerful in order to protect them from sharing your pain. And I knew, although I resisted the idea for months, that the only real way for me to fight back was by writing it all down. I had no other defense except my gift with words. I remembered what my agent had told me earlier in the year: "Your work is your only salvation." And he was right. If I let this ordeal keep me from writing, it was the same as keeping me from living. I was not about to roll over and play dead—not yet, not at only forty-six years old.

Deciding that I was going to write about my experiences was one thing, but what form the book would take was another. How would I portray the complexity of the situation? The power and the extensiveness of the forces aligned against me? How would I take the reader on the journey with me into the darkness and horror of having my mind raped? In order to go on, I had had to push so many things inside of myself. Could I dredge them up now without harm? All I had was questions and no answers, but I knew that the answers would come only as I started to write. I had never been a crusader. I wrote checks to the causes I believed in, but I rarely went to demonstrations. It was going to take courage, and I wondered if it was more courage than I had. I hoped not. I hoped that I would be able to dig my heels in and pull out of myself whatever I needed.

Mine had been a quiet life—a large extended family, a few friends, and my work. I hadn't asked for this invasion into my very being, but it had come. They had slowly eaten away at the edges of

everything that was important to me. Now they wanted my mind. I had no choice but to fight. I had only one simple thing to say in what would be a complex book—this is wrong. It's wrong that it happened to me, and it's wrong that it's happening to hundreds—if not thousands—of others. They come and they go in the middle of the night with their fancy computers and fancy machines. And it's wrong. They feel the swell of power at the pit of their stomachs as they go where few human beings have gone before. On the internet there are those who scream about a violation of human rights, privacy, constitutional rights. Most Americans can't tell you the third or fourth or fifth amendment to the constitution, but they know when something is wrong. And this is wrong. That's what I wanted to do with my book, to shed light where there'd been only darkness, so people could finally see what has been happening all around them. Once they see, it will be up to them to do something about it. And maybe those who have hidden themselves behind a veil of silence will feel that it's okay to come out. That there are now more than a few who would believe them. I wanted this book for this, but above all, I wanted it for me. If I could finally manage to write it, then I have won the battle for my mind.



Dick Simon sits with the Naylor file in his hands. He's trying to decide if it's a good or a bad day at work. He needs to come to one conclusion or another before he opens the report. He doesn't want this file to have the power to change his mood one way or other. He decides that it's a good day, but what he reads in the report makes it even better. Gloria Naylor is going to write a book about her experiences this past year. Now they could use their technology to stop her. It seems that for the most part, she's weathered the operation pretty well. There are some signs of depression, but

nothing major. She's sleeping more and going out less. From the phone transcripts he can tell that she's not talking about the surveillance as much as she used to. And she never talks about the voices in her head. What she tells that shrink is another matter, one that's closed to them because he decided there would be no more bugs placed in his office. They have enough intelligence on her to gauge what her reactions are. She doesn't know it, but she's closing down a little each day. No one, no matter how strong, can go through an experience like this unaffected. Some crumble sooner than others, but ultimately they all crumble. Once they stop her from writing this book, she'll go over the edge. Writing is all she has, and when that's taken away, what else is left?

Thinking about it, they would be doing her a favor. One that she doesn't deserve, but it'll be a fallout from this nonetheless. They will be saving her from the public humiliation of having this book trashed in every review medium in the country. That is, if she even finds a publisher. They'll all shake their heads sadly over the fact that a writer of her caliber has gone bonkers. She's seeing Jews coming out of the woodwork, government agents tapping her phone and hacking into her computer, cars mysteriously driving pass her when she's out in the street. Was she planning on fiction or science-fiction? Either way it would be doomed. In the best-case scenario for her, she would find a publisher to print her nonsense and it sells more than fifty copies, but there she would be the queen of the weirdoes, crowned by the same people who brought you UFOs at Roswell, time travel, and invisible CIA agents. Yes, they were doing her a great favor by keeping this book from even being written. Dick Simon almost smiles.

The Boys have their marching orders. Zap her whenever and wherever you can. Zap her twenty-four hours a day if need be. She is to go to bed hearing you and wake up hearing you. She is not.

under any circumstances, to be given a clear enough head to plan, shape, or execute the writing of this book about them, or any book about anybody. "So it's full steam ahead to the loony bin," Paulo says. "God, how I love this man." The others are so happy they need to crow. The three of them stick their heads out of the windows and let loose; Caw, caw! Caw, caw!

They are going to need full access of the Swiss family's condo to execute their orders fully. Monty Swiss won't be a problem. Over the months they've told the idiot anything, and he swallowed it. It's the wife who might be a hindrance, but it seems that she goes along with anything he says. So, they go to Monty and tell him that the Naylor woman has found some of the bugs placed in her house and that they would have to use more sophisticated devices to get the goods on her drug-dealing. They have equipment that lets them listen through the very walls, but that means they'll have to move from room to room on occasion. They understand that it's an inconvenience, but it'll help them shut down the operation a lot sooner and put her in jail where she belongs. It will definitely be a sacrifice on his part, but one that his country would appreciate. If he had hesitated, they would have respected him more. But he was like a dog, straining on a leash after a bone. Whatever it takes, fellas. Whatever it takes. They hate to admit it, but sometimes they liked the Naylor woman better than him. At least, she had some dignity and questioned what was happening around her. If the tables were turned and it was her house, they would never have been able to torment the Swiss family through her walls. But thank God for the many Swisses of the world. It helped to make their job a lot easier.

Hello bitch.

When she sits down to her breakfast she hears them.

We hope it makes you choke.

When she tries to read in her study she hears them.

Scream. Scream.

And when the evening comes, she hears them.

You know you want to kill yourself. Go ahead.

But the biggest thrill of all is that her answers are showing in print on the screen in front of them.

Eat shit and die.

You die.

Scream.

You scream.

Scream.

Leave me alone.

We'll leave you alone when you leave us alone. Bitch.

And then she gathers up her books and runs to the library. It's a pity that there's no way to follow her there. Or to that shrink who's filling her head with God knows what. They wonder what really keeps her going. It's now two straight weeks of constantly zapping her and she's still on her feet. But they never grow tired. When it's time for them to sleep, other agents take over. And it's important that the script stay the same. She's a bitch. She wants to kill herself. She wants to scream. Each agent can vary it to their own tastes, but that's to be the final message.

When she's out of range, she must hear these things. They must play over and over in her head like a broken record. There's no way for her to think clearly anymore, no way to do any meaningful work. The surveillance team they send into the library with her says that she'll read a few pages of her book, then sit with her hand under her chin, staring out the window. She has a yellow pad in front of her, but she hasn't been seen doing any writing. They are angry with her for giving them such a hard time. Doesn't the witch know that she's to cave in? That she's supposed to run around the house, screaming and pulling out her hair; or even better, out in the streets doing it? Yet here she is, making a date with a friend to see

a movie. Well, they would just have to double their activities. But they don't know how to do anymore than they've been doing. Sooner or later, she's going to write on that yellow pad. And then what would they do? It's Paulo who comes up with the idea of "looping" her. Just typing in a lot of nonsense before pressing the "send" key and filling her head with sound. He shows the others what he means:

Here you are trying to sleep, and you'll never sleep because you are a vengeful bitch. You and all your friends are losers because you can't stop us from doing this, and why should we stop, bitch. You're not dead yet and we want you to die, and you want to die also, but you don't have the guts to do it, so here's a little help. Go into the bathroom and swallow a whole bottle of those sleeping pills or throw yourself off the roof, yeah that would be a good one, just throw yourself off the roof and end it all now, because you want to end it. You want to stop being a bitch and a loser. You want...

Yeah, that's it. Just loop her until she goes crazy from a lack of sleep. It isn't much, but it's the best they can do for now. They have to show Dick Simon that they're making some type of progress. One way or another, they have to bring this witch down.



If it weren't for the library, they would have won, because the voices had started chattering without end. And it was always the same thing, over and over again. They wanted me to feel that I was alone and worthless. But I knew that the abuse was coming from them, and not from me. Whenever I walked up those vast steps to the main branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, I felt like I was getting out of slavery and moving towards my freedom. And to

leave was to go back into bondage again. So I stayed from the time the building opened until it closed. I sat for hours, sometimes reading but mostly thinking, knowing that in there, my thoughts were my own. I thought a lot about the book I wanted to write—needed to write—in order to gain control of my life again. I couldn't stop them from following me into the library, and I couldn't stop them from filling my head with garbage when I walked back into my home again, but I could take 1996 and all that it had brought me, in the palms of my hand and shape it into something that made sense. Little by little they had nibbled away at the edges of my life, but I could reclaim those pieces if I could find the will.

My biggest problem was fear. I was afraid that dredging up the past would overwhelm me and that all those feelings I'd pushed inside would rise up and fill me with incapacitating despair. I was also afraid that no one would believe me, that my experiences would be chalked up to the ruminations of an ill mind. Above all, I was afraid that I simply couldn't do it, that there was nothing left in me to draw on; that my mind had been damaged beyond repair. I was walking in darkness and perhaps would stay there for the rest of my life. But the only way to find out about any of this was to start.

I looked at the miles of bookshelves around me. So many dreams. But there must have been nightmares too. The death of children, fires, hunger, years of no recognition, but they wrote through it all. If so many could find a way to soar, couldn't I? Writing, even under the best of circumstances is not an easy task, and I was asking myself to write under an impossible condition. I asked my mind to dig in just a little bit more and pull up the strength to tell my story. I asked myself to look beyond the scars. The yellow pad was on the table before me and so was the pen. I only had to pick it up and start, one sentence a day. If I could manage just one sentence a day, then I wasn't alone and I wasn't worthless. It didn't matter how many were against me or how strong. If

they couldn't keep me from that one sentence, I had won.

My hand was trembling so badly I couldn't recognize my own writing. I scratched it all out and began again, this time printing in block letters: I DIDN'T WANT TO TELL THIS STORY. IT'S GOING TO TAKE COURAGE. PERHAPS, MORE COURAGE THAN I POSSESS, BUT THEY'VE LEFT ME NO ALTERNATIVES. I AM IN A BATTLE FOR MY MIND...

Addendum

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Litigation Against NSA
by John St. Clair Akwei

John St. Clair Akwei vs. NSA, Ft. Meade, MD, USA

Cover Page

Evidence for the Lawsuit filed at the US courthouse in Washington, D.C. (Civil Action 1:92 - cv - 00449)

John St. Clair Akwei vs. NSA Ft George G. Meade, MD

My knowledge of the National Security Agency's structure, national security activities, proprietary technology, and covert operations to monitor individual citizens.

The NSA's Mission and the NSA's Domestic Intelligence Operation

Communications Intelligence (COMINT)

Blanket coverage of all electronic communication in the U.S. and the world to ensure national security. The NSA at Ft. Meade, Maryland has had the most advanced computers in the world since the early 1960's. NSA technology is developed and implemented in secret from private corporations, academia, and the general public.

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT)

The Signals Intelligence mission of the NSA has evolved into a program of decoding EMF waves in the environment for wirelessly tapping into computers and tracking persons with the electrical currents in their bodies. Signals Intelligence is based on the fact that everything in the environment, with an electric current in it, has a magnetic flux around it which gives off EMF waves. The NSA/DoD has

developed proprietary advanced digital equipment which can remotely analyze all objects, whether man-made or organic, that have electrical activity.

Domestic Intelligence (DOMINT)

The NSA has records on all U.S. citizens. The NSA gathers information on U.S. citizens who might be of interest to any of the over 50,000 NSA agents (DOMINT). These agents are authorized by executive order to spy on anyone. The NSA has a permanent National Security Anti-Terrorist surveillance network in place. This surveillance network is completely disguised and hidden from the public.

Tracking individuals in the U.S. is easily and cost-effectively implemented with the NSA's electronic surveillance network. This network (DOMINT) covers the entire U.S., involves tens of thousands of NSA personnel, and tracks millions of persons simultaneously. Cost effective implementation of operations is assured by NSA computer technology designed to minimize operational costs.

NSA personnel serve in Quasi-public positions in their communities and operate cover businesses and legitimate businesses that can inform the intelligence community of persons they would want to track. NSA personnel in the community usually have cover identities such as social workers, lawyers and business owners.

Individual citizens occasionally targeted for surveillance by independently operating NSA personnel.

NSA personnel can control the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals in the U.S. by using the NSA's domestic intelligence network and cover businesses. The operations independently run by these persons can sometimes go beyond the bounds of law. Long-term control and sabotage of tens of thousands of unwitting citizens by NSA operatives is likely to happen. NSA DOMINT has the ability to covertly assassinate U.S. citizens or run covert psychological control operations to cause subjects to be diagnosed with ill mental health.

NSA's Domestic Electronic Surveillance Network

As of the early 1960's, the most advanced computers in the world were at the NSA, Ft. Meade. Research breakthroughs with these computers were kept for the NSA. At the present time, the NSA has nanotechnology computers that are 15 years ahead of present computer technology.

The NSA obtains blanket coverage of information in the U.S. by using advanced computers that use artificial intelligence to screen all communications, irregardless of medium, for key words that should be brought to the attention of NSA agents/cryptologists. These computers monitor all communications at the transmitting and receiving ends. This blanket coverage of the U.S. is a result of the NSA's Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) mission.

The NSA's electronic surveillance network is based on a cellular arrangement of devices that can monitor the entire EMF spectrum. This equipment was developed, implemented, and kept secret in the same manner as other electronic warfare programs.

With this technology NSA personnel can non-obtrusively tap into any communication device in existence. This includes computers, telephones, radio and video-based devices, printers, car electronics, and even the minute electrical fields in humans (for tracking individuals).

Signals Intelligence Remote Computer Tampering

The NSA keeps track of all PCs and other computers sold in the U.S. This is an integral part of the Domestic Intelligence network.

The NSA's EMF equipment can tune into RF emissions from personal computer circuit boards (while filtering out emissions from monitors and power supplies). The RF emission from PC circuit boards contains digital information in the PC. Coded RF waves from the NSA's equipment can resonate PC circuits and change data in the PCs. Thus the NSA can gain wireless, modem-style entry into any computer in the country for surveillance or anti-terrorist electronic warfare.

Addendum

Radio and television signals can be substituted at the receiving end with special EMF equipment. Replacing signals in radios and televisions is another outgrowth of the NSA's Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) mission.

Detecting EMF Fields in Humans for Surveillance.

A subject's bioelectric field can be remotely detected, so subjects can be monitored anywhere they are. With special EMF equipment NSA cryptologists can remotely read evoked potentials (from BEGs). These can be decoded into a person's brain-states and thoughts. The subject is then perfectly monitored from a distance.

NSA personnel can dial up any individual in the country on the Signals Intelligence EMF scanning network and the NSA's computers will then pinpoint and track that person 24 hours-a-day. The NSA can pick out and track anyone in the U.S.

NSA Signals Intelligence Use of EMF Brain Stimulation

NSA Signals Intelligence uses **EMF Brain Stimulation** for **Remote Neural Monitoring (RNM)** and **Electronic Brain Link (EBL)**. EMF Brain Stimulation has been in development since the MKUltra program of the early 1950's, which included neurological research into "radiation" (non-ionizing EMF) and bioelectric research and development. The resulting secret technology is categorized at the National Security Archives as "Radiation Intelligence," defined as "information from unintentionally emanated electromagnetic waves in the environment, not including radioactivity or nuclear detonation."

Signals Intelligence implemented and kept this technology secret in the same manner as other electronic warfare programs of the U.S. government. The NSA monitors available information about this technology and withholds scientific research from the public. There are also international intelligence agency agreements to keep this technology secret.

Addendum

The NSA has proprietary electronic equipment that analyzes electrical activity in humans from a distance. NSA computer-generated brain mapping can continuously monitor all the electrical activity in the brain continuously. The NSA records and decodes individual brain maps (of hundreds of thousands of persons) for national security purposes. EMF Brain Stimulation is also secretly used by the military for brain-to-computer links (in military fighter aircraft, for example).

For electronic surveillance purposes, electrical activity in the speech center of the brain can be translated into the subject's verbal thoughts. RNM can send encoded signals to the brain's auditory cortex thus allowing audio communication directly to the brain (bypassing the ears). NSA operatives can use this to covertly debilitate subjects by simulating auditory hallucinations characteristic of Paranoid Schizophrenia.

Without any contact with the subject, Remote Neural Monitoring can map out electrical activity from the visual cortex of a subject's brain and show images from the subject's brain on a video monitor. NSA operatives see what the surveillance subject's eyes are seeing. Visual memory can also be seen. RNM can send images directly to the visual cortex, bypassing the eyes and optic nerves. NSA operatives can use this to surreptitiously put images in a surveillance subject's brain while they are in R.E.M. sleep for brainprogramming purposes.

Capabilities of NSA Operatives using RNM

There has been a Signals Intelligence network in the U.S. since the 1940's. The NSA, Ft. Meade has in place a vast two-way wireless RNM system which is used to track subjects and non-invasively monitor audio-visual information in their brains. This is all done with no physical contact with the subject. RNM is the ultimate method of surveillance and domestic intelligence. Speech and 3D sound, and subliminal audio can be sent to the auditory cortex of the subject's brain (bypassing the ears) and images can be sent into the visual cortex. RNM can alter a subject's perceptions, moods, and motor control.

Speech cortex/auditory cortex link has become the ultimate communications

system for the intelligence community. RNM allows for a complete audio-visual brain-to-brain link, or brain-to-computer link.

National Security Agency Signals Intelligence Electronic Brain Link Technology

NSA SIGNIT can remotely detect, identify and monitor a person's bioelectric fields.

The NSA's Signals Intelligence has the proprietary ability to remotely and non-invasively monitor information in the human brain by digitally decoding the evoked potentials in the 30-50 hz, .5 milliwatt electro-magnetic emissions from the brain.

Neuronal activity in the brain creates a shifting electrical pattern that has a shifting magnetic flux. This magnetic flux puts out a constant 30-50 hz, .5 milliwatt electromagnetic (EMF) wave. Contained in the electromagnetic emission from the brain are spikes and patterns called "evoked potentials."

Every thought, reaction, motor command, auditory event, and visual image in the brain has a corresponding "evoked potential" or set of "evoked potentials." The EMF emission from the brain can be decoded into the current thoughts, images and sounds in the subject's brain.

NSA SIGNIT uses **EMF-transmitted Brain Stimulation** as a communications system to transmit information (as well as nervous system messages) to intelligence agents and also to transmit to the brains of covert operations subjects (on a non-perceptible level).

EMF Brain Stimulation works by sending a complexly coded and pulsed electromagnetic signal to trigger evoked potentials (events) in the brain, thereby forming sound and visual images in the brain's neural circuits. EMF Brain Stimulation can also change a person's brain-states and affect motor control.

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Two-way Electronic Brain-Link is done by remotely monitoring neural audio-visual information while transmitting sound to the auditory cortex (bypassing the ears) and transmitting faint images to the visual cortex (bypassing the optic nerves and eyes, the images appear as floating 2-D screens in the brain).

Two-Way Electronic Brain Link has become the ultimate communications system for CIA/NSA personnel. Remote Neural Monitoring (RNM, remotely monitoring bioelectric information in the human brain) has become the ultimate surveillance system. It is used by a limited number of agents in the U.S. Intelligence Community.

RNM requires decoding the resonance frequency of each specific brain area. That frequency is then modulated in order to impose information in that specific brain area. The frequency to which the various brain areas respond varies from 3 Hz to 50 Hz. Only NSA Signals Intelligence modulates signals in this frequency band.

An example of EMF Brain Stimulation:

| Brain Area | Bioelectric Resonance Frequency | Information Induced Through Modulation |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Motor Control Cortex | 10 HZ | Motor Impulse Co-ordination |
| Auditory Cortex | 15 HZ | Sound which bypasses the ears |
| Visual Cortex | 25 HZ | Images in the brain, bypassing the eyes |
| Somatosensory Cortex | 09 HZ | Phantom Touch Sense |
| Thought Center | 20 HZ | Imposed Subconscious Thoughts |

Addendum

This modulated information can be put into the brain at varying intensities from subliminal to perceptible.

Each person's brain has a unique set of bioelectric resonance/entrainment frequencies. Sending audio information to a person's brain at the frequency of another person's auditory cortex would result in that audio information not being perceived.

The Plaintiff learned of RNM by being in two-way RNM contact with the Kinnecome group at the NSA, Ft. Meade. They used RNM 3D sound directly to the brain to harass the Plaintiff from 10/90 to 5/91. As of 5/91 they have had two-way RNM communications with the Plaintiff and have used RNM to attempt to incapacitate the Plaintiff and hinder the Plaintiff from going to authorities about their activities against the Plaintiff in the last twelve years.

The Kinnecome group has about 100 persons working 24-hours-a-day at Ft Meade. They have also braintapped persons the Plaintiff is in contact with to keep the Plaintiff isolated. This is the first time ever that a private citizen has been harassed with RNM and has been able to bring a lawsuit against NSA personnel misusing this intelligence operations method.

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NSA Techniques and Resources

Remote monitoring/tracking of individuals in any location, inside any building, continuously, anywhere in the country.

A system for inexpensive implementation of these operations allows for thousands of persons in every community to be spied on constantly by the NSA.

Remote RNM Devices

a) NSA's RNM equipment remotely reads the evoked potentials (EEGs) of the human brain for tracking individuals and can send messages through the nervous system to affect their performance.

b) [Information missing from original]

Addendum

c) RNM can electronically identify individuals and track them anywhere in the U.S. This equipment is on a network and is used for domestic intelligence operations, government security, and military base security, and in case of bioelectric warfare.

Spotters and Walk-Bys in Metropolitan Areas

a) Tens of thousands of persons in each area working as spotters and neighborhood/business place spies (sometimes unwittingly) following and checking on subjects who have been identified for covert control by NSA personnel.

b) Agents working out of offices can be in constant communication with Spotters who are keeping track of the NSA's thousands of subjects in public.

c) NSA agents in remote offices can instantly identify (using RNM) any individual spotted in public whom is in contact with the surveillance subject.

Chemicals and Drugs into Residential Buildings with hidden NSA-Installed and maintained plastic plumbing lines.

a) The NSA has kits for running lines into residential tap water and air ducts of subjects for the delivery of drugs (such as sleeping gas or brainwashing aiding drugs). This is an outgrowth of CIA pharmapsychology.

Brief Overview of Proprietary U.S. Intelligence/Anti-Terrorist Equipment Mentioned.

Fixed network of special EMF equipment that can read EEGs in human brains and identify/track individuals by using digital computers. ESB (Electrical Stimulation to the Brain) via EMF signal from the NSA Signals Intelligence is used to control subjects.

EMF equipment that gathers information from PC circuit boards by deciphering RF emissions thereby gaining wireless modem-style entry into any personal computer in the country.

All equipment hidden, all technology secret, all scientific research unreported (as in electronic warfare research).

Addendum

Not known to the public at all, yet complete and thorough implementation of this method of domestic intelligence has been in place since the early 1980's.

Resources

These publications have only been discovered since December 1991, after Plaintiff had already notified authorities (Dept. of Justice, etc.) of public corruption by named NSA employees. When no action was taken against the NSA employees I researched the Intelligence Community electronic surveillance technology involved and discovered the following publications:

The Body Electric

Electromagnetism and the Foundation of Life, by Robert Becker, M.D.

p. 265/313/318. Monitoring neuroelectric information in the brain. E-M wave E.S.B.

Cross Currents, by Robert Becker, M.D.

p. 70, p. 78, p. 105/210/216/220/242/299/303 E-M ESB. Simulating auditory hallucinations. p. 274, "Remote computer tampering using the RF emissions from the logic board."

Currents of Death by Paul Brodeur

p. 27/93. Driving brain electrical activity with external E-M, Magnetophosphenes, Delgado.

The Zapping of America by Paul Brodeur

DoD E-M ESB Research, simulating auditory hallucinations.

Of Mice, Men and Molecules, by John H. Heller. 1963.

p. 110, Bioelectricity. probing the brain with E-M waves.

The 3-Pound Universe, by Judith Hooper

p. 29/132/137. CIA EEG research. EEG's for surveillance.

In the Palaces or Memory, by George Johnson

E-M emissions from the brain, the brain as an open electromagnetic circuit.

The Puzzle Palace, by James Bamford

Signals intelligence, most advanced computers in the early sixties

The U.S. Intelligence Community - Glossary terms at National Security Archives:

Radiation intelligence - information from unintentionally emanated electro-

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magnetic energy, excluding radioactive sources.
The Search for the “Manchurian Candidate,” by John Marks
p. 327. Electrical or radio stimulation to the brain, CIA R&D in bioelectrics.
Secret Agenda, by Jim Hougan
National Security cult groups.
Crimes of the Intelligence Community. by Morton Halperin
Surreptitious entries; intelligence agents running operations against government workers
War in the Age of Intelligent Machines
NSA computer supremacy, complete control of information
Alternate Computers, by Time-Life Books
Molecule Computers
The Mind, by Richard Restak, M.D.
p. 258, EEG Systems Inc., decoding brain E-M emanations, tracking thoughts on a computer.
MedTech, by Lawrence Gallon
Triggering events in the brain directly to auditory cortex signals.
Cyborg, by D.S. Halacy, Jr. (1965)
Brain-to-computer link research contracts given out by the U.S. Government
Psychiatry and the C.I.A.: Victims of Mind Control by Harvey M. Weinstein. M.D.
Dr. Cameron, psychic driving, ultraconceptual communications.
Journey Into Madness: The True Story of Secret CIA Mind Control and Medical Abuse, by Gordon Thomas
p. 127/276/116, 168-69. Intelligence R & D. Delgado. Psychic driving with radio telemetry.
Mind Manipulators, by Alan Scheflin and Edward M. Optori
MKUL TRA brain research for information gathering
The Brain Changers, by Maya Pines.
p. 19. Listening to brain E-M emissions.

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Modern Bioelectricity

Inducing audio in the brain with e-m waves, DoD cover-up, E-M wave
ESB. Remote EEGs.

Magnetic Stimulation in Clinical Neuropsychology by Sudhansu
Chokroverty

Magneto-Phosphenes. Images directly to the visual cortex.

The Mind of Man by Nigel Calder

U.S. Intelligence brain research

Neuroelectric Society Conference - 1971

Audio directly to the brain with E-M waves, two waf remote EEG.

Brain Control by Elliot S. Val Enstein

ESB control of individuals

Towards Century 21 by C.S. Wallia

p. 21. Brain Stimulation for direct-to-brain communication.

Mind Wars by Ron McRae, associate of Jack Anderson

p 62/106/136. Research into brain-to-brain electronic communications,
remote neural E-M detection.

Mind Tools by Rudy Rucker

Brain tapping, communication with varying biomagnetic fields. p. 82

U.S. News and World Report 1/2/84

p. 88. E-M wave brain stimulation. Intelligence community high tech.

Ear Magazine article on extremely low frequency radio emissions in the
natural environment, radio emissions from the human body.

City Paper article on FCC and NSA "complete radio spectrum" listening
posts. 1/17/92.

Frontiers in Science - 1958 - by Edward Hutchings, Jr.

p.48

Beyond Biofeedback - 1977 - by Elmer and Alyce Green

p.118

The Body Quantum by Fred Alan Wolf

Cloning - A Biologist Reports by Robert Gilmore McKinnell

Ethical review of cloning humans.

Hoover's FBI by former agent William Turner

p. 280. Routines of electronic surveillance work.

July 20, 2019 by Arthur C. Clarke

Lida, Neurophonics, Brain/Computer Link

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MegaBrain by Michael Hutchison

p. 107/108/117/120/123. Brain stimulation with E-M waves. CIA research and information control.

The Cult of Information by Theodore Rosnak - 1986

NSA Directive #145. Personal Files in Computers. Computer automated telephone tapping.

The Body Shop

1968 implantation of an electrode array on the visual cortex for video directly to the brain and other 1960s research into electronically triggering phosphenes in the brain, thus bypassing the eyes.

Evoked Potentials by David Regan

Decoding neuroelectric information in the brain.

Survey of Evidence Regarding
Mind Control Experiments
by Cheryl Welsh

2003 Survey of Evidence Regarding Mind Control Experiments

by Cheryl Welsh, January 3, 2003

As director of the nonprofit IRS approved group Citizens Against Human Rights Abuse (CARRA) [now Mind Justice], I have received over 1,800 claims of mind control since 1996. A strong case can be made that the US, Russia, and major countries are developing and conducting classified mind control nonconsensual experiments. The issue of mind control and non-consensual experiments is addressed by European, Russian, and US legislatures, several human rights groups and notably, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). This article is a summary of the mind control issue, including sections on the following:

- a cold war history of electromagnetic weapons development,
- experimentation law and history in the US,
- what electromagnetic radiation and mind control weapons are, according to human rights experts,
- the 2002 UNIDIR endorsement of CARRA's [now Mind Justice] article on experiments and mind control weapons,
- the major cluster of symptoms described by victims, particularly in the US and Russia,
- two obsolete cover stories, exposed with the breakup of the Soviet Union,
- a sample of laws covering mind control weapons,
- a short conclusion,
- citations and
- about CARRA [now Mind Justice] and the author

Overview of a long running issue

A related cold war story of the development of electromagnetic radiation, (EMR) weapons has been documented. As revealed in UN documents, weapons experts' papers and scientific journals, a classified EMR arms

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race between Russia and the US became public knowledge with the momentous event of the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1989.(1) And mind control weapon research is more secret than the Manhattan Project,(the project to develop the atomic bomb.) Some cover stories for mind control projects have been maintained by the US government for fifty years and are now obsolete. One cover story was the US policy for EMR health exposure limits: that EMR has no provable health effects apart from heating. But with the breakup of the Soviet Union, the military flip flopped, threw out this fifty-year scientific fallacy and in 1997 revealed US military funding of the development of “new” weapons based on the biological effects of EMR. A second cover story is that mind control weapons are science fiction. Three recent newspaper articles on fighting terrorism dispel this myth and expose the defense industry’s flip flop attempts to perpetuate it.

Human rights experts and top political figures make comparisons of EMR weapons to the atomic bomb, the most powerful weapons on earth. Freedom of thought can be obliterated with EMR weapons’ attack on the brain in addition to the body. Because EMR weapons are silent, undetectable and leave no trace, some experts say WWII could be fought and won without a trace.(2) This article will present evidence that a classified EMR arms race took place between the US and USSR, ending with a US victory. Given this fascinating and rarely reported history, claims of nonconsensual mind control experiments become plausible.

Mind control experiments are similar to past nonconsensual government experiments: conducted for weaponization of the most significant scientific discoveries of the 20th century.

The discovery of secrets of the atom led to the development of the atomic bomb, and scientists conducted extensive nonconsensual radiation experiments. With the discovery of the secrets of DNA and the development of biological weapons, biological experiments were conducted which have been declassified. Classified US experiments in which microbes were sprayed over cities, as well as post-cold war exposes of Soviet biological warfare efforts to develop lethal viruses have come to light. (3) Claims of mind control experiments beginning in the 1950’s are now supported by evidence of scientific dis-

coveries of brain physiology that have been used to develop mind control weapons by our government. A 1999 book on secret government experiments entitled *Undue Risk* by ethicist, Dr. Jonathan Moreno, stated: “. . . individual human subjects will be needed to ‘perfect’ the instruments for neuroimaging and the interpretation of the images into thoughts and ideas. The military possibilities of such capabilities are evident and the potential for human experiments under highly classified national security conditions are too obvious to require much comment.” (4)

Not surprisingly, mind control victims have been labeled mentally ill. Labeling victims “nut cases” or “kooks” is not new. A 1997 *New York Times Magazine* stated; “For decades, those who claimed to be victims of clandestine radiation experiments conducted by the United States government were dismissed as paranoid.” (5) Mental illness is an overwhelming alternate explanation and cover story for victims to overcome.

In the 1990s, the truth came out; nonconsensual radiation experiments were proven with government documents. Tragically, no laws have been passed to prevent secret experiments from happening again. Dr. Jonathan Moreno has reported that in 2001, President Bush granted the department of Health and Human Services the authority to classify department research as secret. Dr. Moreno warned that this could allow the Defense Department or CIA to undertake secret human experiments with the HHS.(6) The increased secrecy and acquisition of billions of defense dollars are ideal strategies for continuing nonconsensual mind control experiments.

How EMR works on the human mind and body

Electromagnetic radiation weapons work on the theory that the mind and nervous system use electromagnetic signals and signals from outside sources which can mimic, block or alter the mind’s and body’s own electromagnetic radiation signals. A 1997 *US News and World Report* article by Douglas Pasternak entitled “Wonder Weapons” explained this process. “. . . the human body is essentially an electrochemical system, and devices that disrupt the electrical impulses of the nervous system can affect behavior and body functions. But these programs--particularly those involving antipersonnel research--are so well guarded that details are scarce. “People [in the military]

go silent on this issue,” says [Louis] Slesin, [trade publisher of *Microwave News* for the electromagnetic radiation industry], “more than any other issue, people just do not want to talk about this.”(7)

What is proven: classified development of mind control weapons by most of the major world powers-- without accountability.

In the July, 1997 *British Medical Journal*, Robin M. Coupland of the International Committee of the Red Cross inquired, “. . . will the soldiers who have survived battlefields of the future return home with psychosis, epilepsy, and blindness inflicted by weapons designed to do exactly that?” (8) Dr. Barbara Hatch Rosenberg wrote in the September, 1994 issue of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, “Many of the non-lethal weapons under consideration utilize infrasound or electromagnetic energy (including lasers, microwave, or radio-frequency radiation, or visible light pulsed at brain-wave frequency) for their effects. These weapons are said to cause temporary or permanent blinding, interference with mental processes, modification of behavior and emotional response, seizures, severe pain, dizziness, nausea and diarrhea, or disruption of internal organ functions in various other ways. The current surge of interest in electromagnetic and similar technologies makes the adoption of a protocol explicitly outlawing the use of these dehumanizing weapons an urgent matter.”(9)

The November, 1990 *International Review of the Red Cross* reported: “Research work in this field [electromagnetic weapons] has been carried out in almost all industrialized countries, and especially by the great powers, with a view to using these phenomena for anti-material or antipersonnel purposes. In spite of the rarity of publications on this subject, and the fact that it is usually strictly classified information, research undertaken in this field seems to have demonstrated that very small amounts of electromagnetic radiation could appreciably alter the functions of living cells.” (10)

In the June, 1996 *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, Paul Mann wrote, “A Harvard molecular geneticist and biological/chemical warfare specialist, Matthew S. Meselson warned: We’re going to learn how to manipulate every life process, genetic ones, mental ones, the emotional ones, . . . If our

inevitably increasing knowledge of life process is also harnessed to hostile purposes, that will completely change the nature of the expression of human hostility.” (11) Unfortunately, Dr. Meselson’s words have proven to be prophetic.

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research cites “mind control” issue.

Mind control weapons are a serious enough threat to be included along side nuclear, biological and chemical weapons in a document published by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).⁽¹²⁾ The 2002 Media Guide to Disarmament in Geneva was compiled to help the Geneva-based media bring disarmament issues “to the attention of the wider world.” CARRA [now Mind Justice] is one of six Non-Lethal Weapons experts cited by UNIDIR. Others include Human Rights Watch, International Committee of the Red Cross and University of Bradford Department of Peace Studies.

The Media Guide includes a nonlethal weapons “links” section to the Center for Defense Information, the University of Bradford, Non-lethal Weapons Research Project and to my article *Non-lethal Weapons--A Global Issue*.⁽¹³⁾ In this article, I present numerous comments and warnings by international experts and public figures about mind control weapons. The piece presents specific allegations regarding nonconsensual government experiments and classified nonlethal weapons which target the brain and nervous system, or as they are popularly known by the emotionally charged term, “mind control.” Called information and psychotronic weapons in Russia and China, mind control weapons are included in the category of nonlethal weapons in the 2002 Disarmament Guide. UNIDIR is studying the parameters of this issue, nuclear disarmament and fourteen other categories of weapons. The 2002 UNIDIR citation of CARRA [now Mind Justice] and the article substantiate my position that claims of nonconsensual experiments by governments in highly classified mind control weapons programs are a legitimate and serious disarmament issue.

Reported mind control symptoms

Victims from all over the world have contacted CARRA [now Mind Justice] with reports of being targeted with mind control, although approximately seventy-five percent of victims are American and Russian. The following is a description of symptoms most commonly reported by victims:

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for years on end, victims are subjected to various kinds of harassment and torture. Most believe that some technology is remotely targeting and controlling every nerve in their bodies. Heart rates speed up and slow down, bowel movements are regulated, illnesses can turn on and off in an instant. Victims report microwave hearing (which is an unclassified military weapon), or voices in the head (14). Sleep deprivation is common. Thoughts can be read, and played back to the victim, instantaneously. People around the victim have repeated verbatim, the victim's immediate thoughts. Victims report that dreams are manipulated, behaviors controlled, emotions literally played with and all types of pain started and stopped in all parts of the body. Forced muscle movements, forced speech, forced precision manipulation of hands are also reported. Victims describe holograms being projected and remote sexual manipulation and abuse, with pedophilia, homosexual and degrading themes also reported regularly. Microwave burns are frequently reported, along with all types of bizarre and harassing manipulation of electrical equipment, phone, car, TV and computers. Mail tamperings are reported as well. Black bag intelligence tactics -tire slashings, break-ins without burglary but at times including sabotaged, modified items also appear on the list of invasions.

What follows is a short list of less commonly reported symptoms. Victims report the following phenomena spontaneously happens to them: Objects are moved, from tiny gas bubbles in the victim's respiratory tract and yanking legs out from under the victim, all the way up to shoving a moving car sideways. Some type of outside force can strike heavy blows to any object, or set any object including the body into strong vibration, while nearby objects are not vibrating at all. Wrenching of house/building structures cause loud snapping or crackling noises, often heard at precisely the point where a victim is starting to doze off to sleep.

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Victims agree: the experience of mind control phenomena is vicious, amoral, sadistic and cruel. Most victims describe the experience as very debilitating and compare it to mental rape, an electronic prison or total destruction of the quality of their lives. Many have been labeled mentally ill and live with financial ruin, loss of health, social life and career. Victims theorize that the goal of the experiments would appear to be the development of weapons to neutralize the enemy. All say the technology is unbelievably sophisticated and effective. To them, it is like a slow death.

Typical cases of US mind control victims

Dave Fratus and several other prisoners at Utah State Prison in Draper, Utah claimed hearing voices caused by remote electronic emissions in their heads and that the voices said they came from the planet Astra. In a letter dated October 18, 1988, Fratus described "some type of remote control electronic brain punishment. . ." In 1981, Dorothy Burdick wrote the book, *Such Things are Known*, published by Vantage Press. Burdick was a college professor in a northern California community college. She was targeted with, "microwave hearing," the phenomena of voices heard in the head, and caused by microwaves. Mike Sagedy came to the United States from Iran with his family and was targeted. Currently a law student, I believe that I too was targeted when I signed papers for entering the military in 1986. I believe I have been part of some form of baseline study for brain studies on stress, or for military purposes such as psychological operations.

In 1997, victim Carole Sterling committed suicide in order to escape the torture of EMR technology. She described attending the 5th International UFO conference at Mesquite, Nevada in the newspaper, *The Star Beacon* in Paonia, Colorado:

Dear *Star Beacon*, I am writing about something that happened to me which goes back to December, 1995. I went to a conference in Nevada. The day following the last night at the conference, I noticed that I had an injection mark on the base of my spine which was sore. Then the nightmare started three days after my return to Washington, DC. It totally scrambled my brain, leaving me unable to think properly, simply functioning on sheer shock and horror, with total incomprehension of what was going on. It actually was debilitating. The

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room felt like a torture chamber. This forced me out of my home. I believe that the technology used, be it some type of a frequency assault, some sort of directed energy, in addition to whatever was injected in me, has caused damage to my brain. [I have] been living with this debilitating and excruciating pain for the last eight months (15).

Many such incidents have been reported in the mainstream press. The *Kansas City Pitch Weekly* reported in 1995 that, “[Paul Schaefer, engineer] cites numerous examples of occasions when ‘adverse energies,’ ‘beams’ or ‘substances’ have been ‘shot’ at him. “A neighbor called me over to her porch one day, to tell me she’d seen a beam of light come out of the sky and shoot into one of my windows,” said Schaefer. “I could see the path through the garden where the leaves turned yellow. . . . when asked why they want to attack him, he said it was because of his radical activities and writings” (16).

This 1997 excerpt from the *Pennsylvania Inquirer* describes a man who mailed a threatening letter to President Clinton. “According to the affidavit, the letter tells Clinton to “tell the Philadelphia Naval Base to stop trying to brain-wash me into killing people with covert E.L.F. electronic weaponry and asks for “compensation for being a research test victim” (17). This man, Joseph Washington, now networks with a victims’ group in Philadelphia.

This 1988 Los Angeles Times excerpt is long because it contains an exceptional description of what happens to a majority of victims. In addition, Martin Cannon wrote about this case of Rex Niles in chapter five of his book, *The Controllers*, making a point-by-point comparison of Niles’ mind control symptoms with UFO abductee phenomena.

“...Government officials estimate that [Rex] Niles had handed over millions in under-the-table payments to employees of leading contractors in exchange for lucrative subcontracts before he secretly turned government witness and began an undercover campaign with the FBI to sting the crooked buyers who had depended on his largess. Niles’ work as an informant led to the conviction of 19 industry buyers and supervisors on fraud, tax evasion and kickback charges. In April of 1987, in triumph and lauded for his “unprecedented cooperation,” Niles retired into the Federal Witness Protection Program. But in the way stories have of not ending the way

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they are supposed to, . . . Instead, he is living in a suburban home outside Los Angeles, sleeping under a makeshift foil tent fashioned to block the microwaves he believes are killing him. "His aluminum foil hat has tiny holes in it, says Rex Niles, proof that the government is bombarding him with microwaves in an attempt to kill him. . . . He has produced testimony from his sister, a Simi Valley woman who swears that helicopters have repeatedly circled over her home. An engineer measured 250 watts of microwaves in the atmosphere inside Niles' house and found a radioactive disc underneath the dash of his car. . . . The noises started again, he said. "You know, in the middle of the night at two in the morning, when they wouldn't allow me to sleep; when they were aggravating my conscious as well as my subconscious mind, I would hear what sounded like large groups of people. . . that sounded like a bottle breaking in the street. "So I would go to the window, or one time I was dressed because I couldn't sleep, so I went down, and the street was absolutely empty." Niles became convinced that the marshals had set up an elaborate speaker system around his room to confuse him with artificial sounds. In intricate detail, he has worked out his theory of what happened. The marshals, he said, were attempting to make it appear as though he were crazy, setting him up in order to make off with his money. They kept him awake at night to minimize his resistance, he theorized. "...This has been a very tough story to tell people," Niles admitted. "They have a hard time believing me and wonder how could I have this much audacity and this much vanity, to think that I'm worth this kind of a push, this much manpower, equipment, airplanes, helicopters, at one point, 14 lasers. It isn't that I'm worth it. It's because they've got so much to protect . . ." (18)

Mind Control in Russia

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russian reports of mind control have become available. CARRA [now Mind Justice] has formed an international coalition with a major group of mind control victims in Russia. In March, 2002, the Moscow Committee for the Ecology of Dwellings appointed me as the director of CARRA [now Mind Justice] to their Executive Committee. Since Emilia Cherkova and Leah Terekhova founded this Russian group in the 1990S, the organization has often been cited in major Russian newspapers. As an authority in the area of mind control, Emilia has sent CARRA [now Mind Justice] several articles and books on Russian mind control, which are now translated and will soon be posted on the CARRA [now Mind Justice] website. Below is one Russian newspaper article excerpt describing their group. The similarity of both symptoms and the frustration of attempts to obtain help encountered by US and Russian victims, is striking. The 1995 *Moscow Times* article, "Report: Soviets Used Top-Secret' Psychotronic' Weapons":

There may be a scientific explanation for the rigid-faced inflexibility of Soviet-era border guards and soldiers, after all. Reports have emerged of a top secret program of "psychotronic" brainwashing techniques developed by the KGB and the Ministry. The techniques, which include debilitating high frequency radio waves, hypnotic computer-scrambled sounds and mind-bending electromagnetic fields, as well as an ultrasound gun capable of killing a cat at fifty meters, were originally developed for medical purposes and adapted into weapons, said journalist Yury Vorobyovsky, who has been investigating the program for three years. Ecology and Living Environment, an environmental and civil liberties group which claims a membership of 500 people in Moscow, has set up an association of "Victims of Psychotronic Experimentation," who have filed damages claims against the Federal Security Service, or FSB, and the government. Unfortunately, since by definition many of the victims are psychologically disturbed, there is a problem of verification. "The Health Ministry and the FSB are doing medical experiments on over a million innocent people," said Ecology and Living Environment President Yemilia Cherkova, an ex-member of Zelenograd's local council. Cherkova wears a lead helmet in bed to protect herself against the rays she says the government beams into her flat. "They put chemicals in the water and use magnets to alter your mind. We are fighting to prove to the authorities that we are not mad." Nevertheless, the

State Duma is taking the matter seriously enough to draft a law on “security of the individual,” which will include regulation of subliminal advertising and pseudo-religious sects, as well as imposing state controls on all equipment in private hands which can be used as “psychotronic weaponry.” “The law is preemptive,” said Vladimir Lopatkin, chairman of the Duma’s drafting committee. “The equipment that now exists in laboratories must be very strictly controlled to prevent it from being sold to the private sector. Of course this project is surrounded with a lot of hysteria and conjecture. “Something that was secret for so many years is the perfect breeding ground for conspiracy theories” (19).

EMR Weapons: As Powerful As The Atomic Bomb

Nonthermal effects of EMR are the scientific basis for weapons and biological basis of brain function, according to several human rights experts, military and civilian authorities and top government science advisors. For example, Dr. Stefan Possony, a Stanford University Hoover Institute fellow, who was called “the intellectual father of ‘Star Wars’” and was “one of the most influential civilian strategic planners in the Pentagon,” wrote the 1983 Defense and Foreign Affairs article, “Scientific Advances Hold Dramatic Prospects for Psy-Strat.” (20)

“Suppose it becomes feasible to affect brain cells by low frequency waves or beams, thereby altering psychological states, and making it possible to transmit suggestions and commands directly into the brain. Who is so rash as to doubt that technological breakthroughs of this general type would not be put promptly to psyops use? More importantly who would seriously assume that such a technology would not be deployed to accomplish political and military surprise?” (21).

In a 1986 BBC Summary of World broadcast, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, former Soviet leader stated:

“Weapons based on new physical principles would include, amongst others, means in which physical principles which have not been used hitherto are used to strike at personnel, military equipment and objectives. Amongst weapons of this kind one might include beam, radio-wave, infra-

sonic, geophysical and genetic weapons. In their strike characteristics, these types of weapons might be no less dangerous than mass strike weapons. The Soviet Union considers it necessary to establish a ban on the development of arms of this kind.” (22)

US won classified EMR arms race

The former USSR has advocated banning EMR (electromagnetic radiation), weapons since the 1970S. The US has heavily classified nonlethal weapons since the 1960s and has denied the existence of weapons effects of EMR up to the 1990s (23). The Pentagon stated on CNN news that the radiofrequency weapons are too sensitive to discuss and has maintained this stance throughout the 1980's (24). In the 1990S, however, the military admitted to looking for EMR weapons based on EMR bioeffects (25)(26).

Russian classified mind control programs were revealed only as a result of the monumental event of the breakup of the Soviet Union. The 1993 Defense News article entitled “US Explores Russian Mind-Control Technology” revealed some of Russia's EMR weapons. “Known as acoustic psychocorrection, the capability to control minds and alter behavior of civilians and soldiers may soon be shared with US military, medical and political officials, according to US and Russian sources. Pioneered by the government-funded Department of Psycho-Correction at the Moscow Medical Academy, acoustic psycho-correction involves the transmission of specific commands via static or white noise bands into the human subconscious without upsetting other intellectual functions” (27).

Russian top secret and massive mind control weapons programs were in chaos. The 1993 Defense News article stated that US and Russian sources were planning “...discussions aimed at creating a framework for bringing the issue under bilateral or multilateral controls.” Therefore, the Russian authors have proposed a bilateral Center for Psycho-technologies where US and Russian authorities could monitor and restrict the emerging capabilities.” In addition, a 1993 Defense Electronics article discussed concerns that Russian mind control weapons, like atomic weapons would get into the hands of terrorists and criminals and therefore international agreements were needed (28). The United States emerged as the single world super power and classified international agreements now control the use of EMR weapons.

A cover story is now obsolete: Russia & former East Block maintain that nonthermal EMR biological effects are used for new weapons, US says nonthermal EMR effects are not proven.

Russia and the East Block's position was that electromagnetic radiation (EMR) biological effects could be used to develop new weapons of mass destruction. These biological effects were also called athermal or nonthermal effects of EMR because they are in contrast to the thermal effects of EMR, such as those caused by heating food in a microwave oven. The Russian scientific literature going back to the 1930s supported a theory of nonthermal or biological effects of EMR. The UN Committee on Disarmament discussed Russian proposals to ban "new types of weapons of mass destruction." One weapon described by the Soviet government in 1979 was, "Infrasonic acoustic radiation weapons. They would utilize harmful effects of infrasonic oscillations on biocurrents of the brain and nervous system, the 1979 document continued, "meaning they were using electromagnetic radiation to affect biological targets." As a result of research into the effects of electromagnetic radiation on biological targets, the existence of harmful effects of radiofrequency radiations within a wide range of frequencies on such vitally important organs of the human as the heart, the brain and the central nervous system may now be regarded as a firmly established fact. Assessments quoted in international literature of the potential danger of the development of a new weapons of mass destruction are based on the results of research into the so-called "non-thermal" effects of electromagnetic radiation on biological targets. These effects may take the form of damage to or disruption of the functioning of the internal organs and systems of the human organism or of changes in its functioning" (29).

The US position was the exact opposite of the Russian position: that there were no US research programs or weapons based on biological or nonthermal EMR effects. Throughout this period, the US nevertheless conducted classified mind control weapons research based on the athermal or biological effects of EMR.(30) Dr. Robert Becker was a consultant to the CIA in the 1960s on EMR effects on fighter pilots shot down by the Soviets, as reported in *Opening Pandora's Box*, a 1984 BBC TV documentary (31). Dr. Becker stated, "... the best cover story is that, based on best American scientist's [opin-

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ions],.... the [US] nation has discarded [the theory of athermal] health effects from EMR, entirely.” In fact, this was the official US position.

In sharp contrast to the Russian position on biological effects of EMR, the US military, industry and government scientists publicly supported the position of Dr. Herman P. Schwan, a Nazi Paperclip scientist who established the safety limits of electromagnetic radiation exposure for the United States in the 1950s. The US operated Project Paperclip between 1945 and 1955 in an attempt to exploit the expertise of German scientists after WWII, and 765 scientists were employed by the US government, including Dr. Schwan (32). Dr. Schwant’s position--that there are no proven athermal or biological effects of electromagnetic radiation is still largely adhered to today. Professor Schwan worked at the University of Pennsylvania on numerous government contracts and received Navy and National Institute of Health, NIH funding throughout his entire career (33).

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Pentagon publicly unveiled the non-lethal weapons program including weapons based on athermal or biological EMR effects, and the US policy that there are “no proven athermal EMR effects” took a 180 degree turn. The July, 7, 1997 US News and World Report article, “Wonder Weapons” stated: “...scientists, aided by government research on the “bioeffects” of beamed energy, are searching the electromagnetic and sonic spectrums for wavelengths than can affect human behavior.” The former Soviet Union’s position on banning EMR weapons and the flip-flop of the US military’s position on EMR weapons after the breakup of the Soviet Union are indications of national security policy and its influence on the scientific research of EMR and EMR weapons.

That EMR can cause athermal biological effects is now a proven scientific theory. At a 1990 General Assembly of the International Union of Radio Science held in Prague, Dr. Ross Adey concluded that, “It is no longer a matter of speculation that biomolecular systems are responsive to low level, low frequency electromagnetic fields. Not only is tissue heating not the basis of these interactions, but the many instances of responses windowed with respect to field, frequency and intensity set a rubric for their consideration in physical mechanisms involving long range ordering at the atomic level.” (34) The NRC report, An Assessment of Non-Lethal Weapons Science and Technology

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(2002) stated “Leap-ahead non-lethal weapons technologies will probably be based on more subtle human RF interactions in which the signal information within the RF exposure causes an effect other than simply heating: for example, stun seizure, startle, and decreased spontaneous activity. Recent developments in the technology are leading to ultrawideband, very high peak power, and ultrashort signal capabilities, suggesting that the phase space to be explored for subtle, yet potentially effective non-thermal biophysical susceptibilities is vast” (35).

Dr. Adey has also testified before the US Congress on US government suppression and control of research into the biological effects of EMR. (36) A 1988 AP article stated, “Since the early 1980s, however, federal government support for non-ionizing radiation bioeffects research has declined markedly. W. Ross Adey, a leading researcher based at the Veteran’s Administration Medical Center in Loma Linda, Calif., told a House subcommittee last Oct. 6 that current levels of government funding -now about \$7 million a year- are “disastrously low. There is reason to believe that this situation has arisen in part through a well-organized activity on the part of major corporate entities from the consumer and military electronic industries to discredit all research into athermal biological and biomedical effects,” Adey said.

History has revealed that some US scientists knowingly lied, or at the least twisted and omitted evidence, and these unethical actions indicate the seriousness and magnitude of the issues the scientists were attempting to cover up. The public denial of athermal effects of EMR by US government scientists was undoubtedly a cover story for a long-term, highly classified EMR weapons program.

Two scientists, Dr. Rosalie Bertell and Dr. Eldon Byrd, have studied EMR bio-effects and both agree on the under-reported demise of this cover story. Dr. Rosalie Bertell has a doctorate degree in Biometry, the design of epidemiological research and the mathematical analysis of bio-medical problems. Dr. Bertell documented military microwave zapping of Greenham Commons women nuclear protesters in the 1980s as reported in *The London Guardian* March 10, 1987. She authored UN reports on the Chernobyl disaster, has five honorary doctorates, numerous peace prizes and more. In an email dated 3-12-01, Dr. Bertell agreed that this cover story is obsolete (37).

Dr. Eldon Byrd was quoted in the *US News and World Report*, July 7; 1997, “Wonder Weapons” article. From 1980 to 1983, a man named Eldon Byrd ran the Marine Corps Nonlethal Electromagnetic Weapons project. He conducted most of his research at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute in Bethesda, Md. “‘We were looking at electrical activity in the brain and how to influence it,’ he says.” In an email dated 1-10-02, Dr. Byrd also agreed that this cover story is obsolete (38).

Another obsolete cover story: mind control is science fiction

Mainstream media presents mind control weapons to the general public as a future possibility and science fiction. For example, the May 2002, *Economist* wrote “They [people] should worry about brain science too. There are no laws or treaties or public discussion of neurotechnology as there has been for genetics and cloning.” But like so many articles on advances in brain science, the article avoids alarming the reader. The *Economist* article ends, “...to those who fear that neurotechnology is a hili’s breadth from catapulting society into a post-human future... There is a [great] deal of searching to do yet before human nature gives up its secrets” (39). The *Economist* article on the ethics of brain science is typical of what the public has been told--a superficial survey of an issue that completely sidesteps existing military research.

The July 7, 1997 *US News and World Report* article reported, “In fact, the military routinely has approached the National Institutes of Health for research information. ‘DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) has come to us every few years to see if there are ways to incapacitate the central nervous system remotely,’ Dr. F. Terry Hambrecht, head of the Neural Prosthesis Program at NIH, told *US News*. ‘But nothing has ever come of it,’ he said, That is too science fiction and far-fetched.”

The military’s position-- that mind control is science fiction- is not questioned or investigated by mainstream press, and this amounts to an effective cover story to keep mind control weapons classified. The following four articles reveal that the capability to read thoughts is scientifically possible and surely developed by the military, especially given the information available on

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Russian mind control weapons. One article reported that mind reading technology to fight terrorism is possible, according to NASA. But in a fifth article NASA, apparently worried about the developing public controversy, issued a denial stating that mind reading technology is now possible.

In the article, *Decoding Minds*, *Signal Magazine*, October, 2001, Dr. John D. Norseen, of Lockheed Martin stated, "We are at the point where this database has been developed enough that we can use a single electrode or something like an airport security system where there is a dome above our head to get enough information that we can know the number you're thinking," According to *US News and World Report*, January 20, 2000, "The National Aeronautic and Space Administration, [NASA]...have all awarded small basic research contracts to Norseen....portions of them classified..."

One year later in the *Washington Times*, August 17, 2002, the article entitled *NASA plans to read terrorist's minds at airport* stated,

Airport security screeners may soon try to read the minds of travelers to identify terrorists. Officials of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration have told Northwest Airlines security specialists that the agency is developing brain-monitoring devices in cooperation with a commercial firm, which it did not identify. Space technology would be adapted to receive and analyze brain-wave and heartbeat patterns, then feed that data into computerized programs 'to detect passengers who potentially might pose a threat,' according to briefing documents obtained by *The Washington Times*. NASA wants to use 'noninvasive neuro-electric sensors,' imbedded in gates, to collect tiny electric signals that all brains and hearts transmit. Computers would apply statistical algorithms to correlate physiologic patterns with computerized data on travel routines, criminal background and credit information from 'hundreds to thousands of data sources,' NASA documents say. Robert Park, spokesman for the American Physical Society stated, "We're close to the point where they can tell to an extent what you're thinking about by which part of the brain is activated, which is close to reading your mind. . . The idea is plausible," he says, "but frightening."

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Finally, a 180-degree change in position was issued from Michael Braukus, NASA Headquarters, Washington, August 20, 2002(Phone: 202/358-1979) RELEASE: 02-160: "NASA rejects claims it plans mind-reading capability." NASA managers today said published media reports suggesting the agency plans to read the minds of potential terrorists go too far and ignore the facts and science behind the research. "...NASA does not have the capability to read minds, nor are we suggesting that would be done," said Robert Pearce, Director, NASA's Strategy and Analysis Division in the Office of Aerospace Technology in Washington. "...Some of the ideas will take several years of effort to establish, if there is a practical application."

Since the 1950s, scientists have warned about new brain research but usually add that the discovery of the secrets of the brain is years away. This is hard to believe when looking back at the title and excerpt of a 1976 *Los Angeles Times* article "Mind Reading Machine" Tells Secrets of the Brain, Sci-Fi Comes True.

Washington-In a program out of science fiction, the government is developing mindreading machines that can show, among other things, whether a person is fatigued, puzzled or daydreaming. The Advanced Research Projects Agency says the \$1 million-a-year program has passed its initial laboratory tests and is ready for determination of its military uses. Scientist working under agency contracts at the University of Illinois, UCLA, Stanford, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Rochester and in laboratories [and] other facilities have been able to determine an individual's alertness from his brain waves. It may be only a matter of time before the machines will be able to read a person's brain waves to determine just what he is thinking (40).

And yet the cover story continues to be maintained. Information available on mind control weapons in mainstream press continues to be biased and incomplete.

Discussions and legislation of mind control weapons

The development and control of mind control weapons and concerns about nonconsensual experiments is a growing international issue, as seen in a few of the many available government documents. Here are four significant and recent US, Russian, and European documents.

House of Representative Dennis Kucinich submitted this October 2nd, 2001 H.R. bill 2977, "The Space Preservation Act of 2001" (41). This bill proposed banning weapons in space, including "psychotronic" and "mind control" weapons. The relevant excerpt states "Inflicting death or injury on, or damaging or destroying, a person (or the biological life, bodily health, mental health, or physical and economic well-being of a person) through the use of land-based, seabased, or space-based systems using radiation, electromagnetic, psychotronic, sonic, laser, or other energies directed at individual persons or targeted populations for the purpose of information war, mood management, or mind control of such persons or populations." According to Kucinich's office, amidst pressure and concerns about ensuring bill passage, this section of the bill was removed in Spring, 2002.

1998 Russian Federal law, About Weapons is cited in the edition of Federal Laws Russian Federation. This law prohibits "the circulation of civilian and military weapons" including the "use of radio-active radiations and biological factors -weapons and other objects, the affects of the operations of which are based on the use of electro-magnetic, light, thermal, infra-sonic or ultra-sonic radiations and which have [exiting] parameters, exceeding the magnitude of established governmental standards of the Russian Federation and corresponding norms of Federal governmental organs in the area of the health department," (42). This Russian law is in effect today.

1998 report by Morton Sklar of the World Organization Against Torture, entitled: "Torture in the United States" (43), the chapter on involuntary human scientific experimentation concludes with the following:

Similar concerns also are being raised about involuntary human experimentation involving new forms of classified research and testing of high technology military weaponry, including microwave and laser equipment.

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Groups working on these issues cite, among other evidence of the existence of these unauthorized testing procedures, a White house intergovernmental memorandum dated March 27, 1997, establishing stronger guidelines prohibiting non-consensual testing for classified research, but suggesting, by implication, that this type of human subject research may, in fact, be taking place. Because of the classified nature of these activities, it is very difficult to confirm or disprove that they are taking place. Given the serious negative impacts on non-consensual human subjects that classified research of this type is capable of producing, and given the past history of secret experimentation by the government, these allegations of continuing improprieties involving secret government sponsored human testing should not be dismissed without more thorough, impartial investigation.

European Parliament Resolution A4-00S/99 on Environment, Security and Foreign policy, passed on January 29, 1999. The draft resolution specifically discussed the serious concerns regarding electromagnetic radiation weapons. The formal resolution calls for an “international convention introducing a global ban on all developments and deployments of weapons which might enable any form of manipulation of human beings” (44).

Conclusions

As history has shown, governments will never reveal classified weapons or nonconsensual experiments unless public opinion forces compliance. Mainstream press is repeating its historical stance regarding radiation experiments by assessing victims as crazy and refusing to investigate further. A number of experts agree that, given the increasing numbers reporting nonconsensual mind control experiments, to wait for solid proof of this issue is dangerous and inhumane, especially in light of the history of secret state experiments for the development of weapons. An investigation is appropriate.

The response to mind control victims by the FBI, police, congressmen, lawyers, newspaper reporters, friends and family has been that there is no proof of a mind control program of nonconsensual experimentation. In addition to the barrier of a US cold war defense budget and a climate of secrecy which has continued into the 21st century, victims must deal with the stigma of the label of mental illness. For fifty years, mental illness has been a conven-

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ient excuse for not investigating claims of mind control. But now the circumstantial evidence of nonconsensual experiments is powerful enough to be cited by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and human rights groups. With laws to ban and control the use of mind control weapons, the tide is turning, in spite of the on-going classification of mind control programs.

Mind control weapons have formally become public knowledge and for the first time, information has become available from Russia. Human rights experts warn of EMR weapons comparable to the atomic bomb, and the evidence of a fifty year EMR arms race confirm the importance of mind control weapons to US and Russia. The east/west scientific controversy over EMR biological effects is a strong indication of deeply classified and extensive mind control programs. The US government cannot credibly explain away the historical record of deception. The cover story that mind control weapons are science fiction is obsolete but the military continues to attempt to use it while reporters do not investigate.

The conclusion that the human brain is decoded, just like DNA and the secrets of the atom seems certain. Evidence supports the fact that control of your mind is another classified military capability, like biological weapons and the atomic bomb. CARRA [now Mind Justice] will continue to gather documentation of nonconsensual government mind control experiments and work towards stopping another illegal cold war program.

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31. "Opening Pandora's Box," 1984. Produced by David Jones for Fulcrum Central Productions, aired on BBC Channel 4. Dr. Becker was asked by the CIA in early 60s to determine whether pilots shot down and captured by Soviets in the 1960's could possibly have been exposed to EMR without them realizing it and would that have caused personality changes. The pilots were tested psychologically before then after they arrived home. A dramatic change in test results was found. The question posed was, can you change, entrain brainwaves with an external source? "Pilots did not report bad treatment and were not aware of any EMR exposure by Soviets during debriefing sessions." They were interned by the Soviets for two to six week and returned with "considerable personality alterations." The CIA wanted to know if there was a relationship between the Moscow Embassy [microwave bombardment] and flight crews that would cause personality alteration. Dr. Becker stated "yes, there is a distinct possibility, we don't know at this time for sure."

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Rosalie Bertell, 312-01, excerpt below.

Date: Mon, 12 Mar 2001 18:27:42 -0500

Dear Cheryl, I have received your document and I think you have enough information for a documentary report or an article by an investigative reporter. It may raise concern about the issues, but does not prove anything. [Dr. Bertell is referring to the document on my website, entry 14, EMR Weapons: As Powerful as the Atomic Bomb]. There is some confusion about weapon use and harassment or experimental use, with the latter being harder to document. The health effects which can be attributed to EMR weapons is also, as you know, not established. Your problems are quite similar to that of the atomic bomb victims, including the military, the Japanese and those living downwind of a nuclear test site. Very few of the experienced health effects have ever been admitted. We also deal with the same denial and secrecy with the Gulf War, Bosnia and Kosovo vets exposed to ceramic DU.

38. Email excerpt to Cheryl Welsh, From: "Eldon Byrd"

Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2002 5:43 PM

"...I agree that the thermal/athermal effects has ended, but I think for a different reason. What Frey discovered (that microwave effects can create clicks in the brain) was a thermal effect. Thermal effects can cook the brain, and even though it was admitted that we (the US) looked into it, the ability to control a distance effect such as this just was not there. I had to fight tooth and nail to convince the establishment that EMF had nothing to do with thermal effects. The establishment position was that ONLY microwaves could create an effect in the brain. Of course, they have changed their tune, over my dead body, and the dead bodies of some others. The references you quote are valid. Your statement that the Russian evidence is important because it shows that the Russians have (at least had) a large mind control program dating back to the 1950's and therefore the US would also have a very (I would say, "it is reasonable to assume") classified mind control program, is pretty much dead on, in my opinion. And it is this area that my proposal will deal with--the other areas are more

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controversial, although the thermal/athermal issue is pretty dead, I think.
...Eldon

39. No author. "The ethics of brain science: Open your mind." *The Economist*. May 23, 2002. Posted at
<http://www.economist.com/opinion/displayStory.cfm?Story id=1143317>

40. Kempster, Norman. "Mind Reading Machine Tells Secrets of the Brain Sci-Fi Comes True." *Los Angeles Times*. March 29, 1976.

41. More information on "The Space Preservation Act of 2001" posted at:
mindjustice.org/l-023.htm [updated 2-04].

42. See CARRA [now Mind Justice] web site for Russian translation at mindjustice.org/l-02s.htm [updated 2-04]. This law, "About Weapons" is cited in the edition of Federal Laws RF. from 21.07.98. [1998] ISBN 5-86894-393-7, thanks to Emilia Cherkova and translator Ramon Ruelas.

43. World Organization Against Torture USA October, 1998 Report on "Torture in the United States, The Status of Compliance by the US Government with the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment" This report is another milestone thanks to the three years of lobbying efforts by Harlan Girard of the ICOMW. This report was prepared by "The Coalition Against Torture and Racial Discrimination, a joint working group of non-governmental civil and human rights groups in the US, compiled and edited by Morton Sklar, director, World Organization Against Torture USA. The project to organize a working group of US based civil and human rights organizations, and compile and issue a joint report on US compliance under the Convention Against Torture was made possible through grants provided by the Ford Foundation and the World Council of Churches." A partial list of individuals who contributed to this report were the ABA, ACLU, AI, Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute, and many more. A copy can be obtained from OMCT Suite 400, 1015 18th St. NW Washington, DC 20036 tele, (202) 861-6494, website at: <http://www.woa-tusas.org/>.

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44. The relevant section to ED A4-005/99 is posted on the 11 European Parliament website at http://www.europarl.eu.int/home/default_en.htm. Find “activities,” then click on “Plenary Sessions,” then click on “Reports by A4 number,” then fill in “0005.”

Websites of Interest

The Mind Control Forum: www.mindcontrolforums.com

Eleanor White: www.raven1.net

Cheryl Welsh: www.mindjustice.org



Gloria Naylor is a writer for theatre, film and television and the author of novels which include *The Women of Brewster*

Place (1983 National Book Award Winner), *Mama Day* and *Bailey's Cafe*. She also edited the anthology, *Children of the Night: The Best Short Stories by Black Writers 1967 to the Present*. Her novels now mark their twelfth language translation.

She has been distinguished with numerous honors including Senior Fellow, The Society for the Humanities, Cornell University; The President's Medal, Brooklyn College; and Visiting Professor, University of Kent, Caterbury, England. Ms. Naylor has won Guggenheim and National Endowment for the Arts fellowships for her novels; for her screen writing, she has been awarded the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship. In April of 1994, *Bailey's Cafe* enjoyed a successful run during its world premier at the Hartford Stage Company.

After having published critically-acclaimed novels like *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Mama Day*, Gloria Naylor returns with *1996*. In this startling account, we find Naylor buying a house on St. Helena Island, off the coast of South Carolina. Here she seeks the serenity of a writer's life. She intends to enjoy life, relax, write in peace, and tend to her garden. Her tranquility is ruined, however, by a woman, who feels threatened by Naylor's presence. When this woman's fears spur a massive covert surveillance operation against Naylor in 1996, the year becomes one of discomfort and confusion for Naylor.

Whether readers think Naylor has been a victim of pernicious abuse or that she suffered a breakdown, her incredible book will spark debate about government surveillance and the blurring of the lines between fiction and nonfiction.

— *Booklist*

This "fictionalized memoir"/novel offers an account of a writer's minor fracas with a crotchety neighbor on St. Helena Island, off South Carolina's coast (whose brother just happens to be an official with the National Security Agency) that set into motion events that make Gloria Naylor, the self-named character, the object of intense scrutiny by the government and local Jewish organizations. The novel depicts the harassment as continuing after she returned to New York, escalating into mind-control techniques.

In a recent interview, she said, "I know some people will say that Gloria Naylor just lost it in 1996. There's nothing I can do about that assumption. But people who have been victims will read this as a true story."

— *Black Issues Book Review*

Fiction

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